THE EXTENDED FAMILY: SOCIETY'S FORGOTTEN RESOURCES

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGING, FAMILY AND HUMAN SERVICES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETY-SEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

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THE EXTENDED FAMILY: SOCIETY'S FORGOTTEN RESOURCES

TUESDAY, MAY 11, 1982

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGING, FAMILY AND HUMAN SERVICES,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:44 a.m., in room 6226, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Jeremiah Denton, (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senator Denton.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR DENTON

Senator DENTON. Good morning. This hearing will come to order.

I am pleased to chair this hearing of the Subcommittee on Aging, Family and Human Services on the subject of Extended Families: America's Forgotten Resource. This morning we hope to gather information on the current status of the extended family, to recognize influences that prevent its full utilization as part of our country's helping network, and to examine measures that can be taken to enhance its role.

All reputable historians recognize that the family is the keystone to any strong society. The nuclear family, typically comprised of mother, father, and children, is certainly the core of this strength. The nuclear family does not, however, exist in a vacuum. A strong influence in its development and stability has come historically from what sociologists term the extended family. The extended family has traditionally been considered to include the blood relatives of the mother, father, and children.

Until the beginning of the 20th century, it was normal for nuclear families to live in close proximity to grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. Those members of the extended family were readily available to provide mutual, social support. In a time of crisis involving one portion of the family, another part could, and did, provide appropriate assistance.

Both the nuclear family and the traditional role and strength of the extended family have weakened drastically, especially in the past 20 years, largely because of the growing divorce rate. The United States now has the highest divorce rate in its history, the highest of any nation in the industrial world, and the second highest of any nation in the entire world. The National Center for Health Statistics has reported that, in 1979, there were 1,181,000 divorces in the United States, whereas in 1959 there were only

395,000 divorces. The rate of increase far exceeds the population growth during that 20-year period.

Many observers attribute the high divorce rate to the so-called sexual revolution, which has radically altered perceptions in many Americans' minds of the place of marriage, sexual fidelity, and the responsibility of parenthood in their hierarchy of values. To many Americans, sexual permissiveness is now the norm, and marriage is no longer considered a lifelong vocation. Single parents are thus growing in number, as are unmarried parents, and unloved, abandoned, and abused children.

Certainly there are heavy social costs to this phenomenon. Perhaps the greatest casualty is the unhappiness of children.

There is no question that there is a relationship between the amount of compassion, respect, and commitment spouses and family members have for one another and the strength of the family.

Unfortunately, what might be called the instant self-gratification syndrome, including the sexual revolution, has had an adverse impact on the stability of many American families, as well as on drug abuse, violent crime, and other tragic and expensive social problems.

Interpersonal relationships are too often viewed in terms of how quickly they gratify "me" here and now, rather than in terms of the establishment and maintenance of a mutual, long-term sharing and loving, responsible relationship.

Although a study of internal family problems is a crucial element of a complete examination of the extended family, its scope is beyond our hearing today. We will address it in some detail in the future.

Our hearing today deals with the impact of technological advances, greater mobility and increased specialization of American industrialization and economic growth on the extended family, with the impact of governmental policy on this family unit, and how these factors, in turn, influence the nuclear family.

As a result of these changes, namely the industrial revolution, and all it brought, and the governmental policies, trying to deal with that, several things happened.

Employers moved their workers from one geographic area to another with more frequency. Advancement opportunities in locations other than the individual's hometown became more accessible. More and more families found themselves physically remote from their relatives.

Families increasingly turned to indigenous, local community groups to provide support services in times of need.

Churches, civic clubs, and other grassroots organizations began to perform some of the functions previously done primarily by extended families in the blood-related sense. These organizations became, in effect, the new extended families and the first resort in times of need.

The Federal Government's attempt to build an elaborate social welfare delivery system was, in part, an attempt to augment these new local support systems. Although conceived with the best of intentions, many of these programs evolved into many-layered, unwieldy, impersonal and ineffective institutions more concerned

with self-preservation and broad programs than with meeting the personal needs of individuals and families. Some of the natural community support groups found themselves edged out, their role diminished or supplanted by a welfare department, a day care center, or a food stamp office drawing sustenance from a seemingly endless stream of Federal funds.

We are seeing the end of that pool from which that stream flows. We have got to do it less expensively, more effectively.

Fortunately, other nongovernmental community groups that contribute strongly to the well-being of the nuclear family and constitute a sort of non-blood-related extended family, have continued their work, and have increased their importance. This type of private, local involvement is making a significant comeback and may well flourish again if given the opportunity.

I can point, for example, to Father George Clements, a priest in Chicago, who has testified earlier, and who has been highly successful in bringing about church involvement in adoptions. We are going to have more examples here today, as points of departure.

At our hearings today, we are fortunate to have Sister Falaka Fattah, from the House of Umoja in Philadelphia, and Ms. Sydney Duncan from Homes for Black Children in Detroit. They run effective community-based programs that function with few Federal funds. Their programs are excellent examples of the American people's ability to grapple with difficult social problems at the local level with imagination and compassion when they are allowed to "get on with it," unfettered by a bureaucratic maze of regulations and restrictions.

President Reagan has made bold new proposals to increase voluntary and private sector activities such as these. I believe that the President is on the right track for two reasons.

First, social welfare programs now consume more than 50 percent of the Federal budget. Outlays for these programs have more than tripled in the last 10 years, rising from $106.6 billion in 1972 to $364.2 billion in 1982. We simply must address this problem of runaway spending and do it now. A bankrupt nation can provide for no one, and the first to suffer in inflationary times, which we have been suffering, are the poor, the elderly, and the disadvantaged.

Second, and every bit as important, local community support groups are generally closer to the people they serve and better able to define their problems than are the impersonal agencies funded with taxpayer money. The grassroots groups are aware of, and tap into, existing strengths and resources in the community rather than relying on great quantities of Federal money merely thrown at the problem.

I am particularly interested by an analogy used by Mr. John McKnight, the associate director of the Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research of Northwestern University. He says that families now exist in a universe surrounded by other bodies that make up an interactive system which enables the family to function properly. These bodies include neighborhood organizations, civic clubs, ethnic organizations, local political clubs, family businesses, local unions, churches, and thousands of informal groups. They, in our modern society, perform many of the essential functions once

performed by the extended family, meaning families related by blood.

Mr. McKnight points out that, as doctors, lawyers, social workers, teachers, counsellors, and therapists are funded to provide more and more services, the role of the local, grassroots support groups diminish and the groups themselves atrophy, thus destroying part of the support system for the family. In today's world, with the traditional extended family a victim of technology and a rapidly changing society, our nuclear families need these natural support systems, not impersonal replacement agencies funded by an ever encroaching Federal Government.

We must begin reordering our priorities. Although we cannot recreate immediately the strength of the nuclear or extended family as they once were, we can understand and encourage them where they still exist. As we must understand and encourage single parents in raising their children, we must also avoid further weakening of the other natural support systems our society can provide.

We can no longer afford to funnel massive amounts of money to professionals who see individuals and families not as people, but as clients in need of treatment and therapy. Not only is this costly, but it has the effect of convincing families that they are incompetent to know, care, teach, or make ends meet. American families deserve better than that.

To lead off today we are fortunate to have a distinguished group of researchers on the first panel, including Mr. Robert Woodson of the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy, Dr. Nancy Colletta of the University of Maryland; and Dr. Robert Hill, Associated Bureau of Social Science Research.

I would like to welcome all three of you. We consider ourselves fortunate to have such involved and committed people, well aware of the kinds of questions that we are trying to look into.

I will reserve questions to any and all of you until after the last person has testified. I will ask Mr. Woodson to proceed, and we will proceed from my left to right. Mr. Woodson will be followed by Dr. Colletta, and then Dr. Hill.

Please proceed, Mr. Woodson.

STATEMENTS OF ROBERT L. WOODSON, RESIDENT FELLOW, THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH, AND PRESIDENT, NATIONAL CENTER FOR NEIGHBORHOOD ENTERPRISE; DR. NANCY DONOHUE COLLETTA, DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGIST AND PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND; DR. ROBERT B. HILL, PH. D., FORMER DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH, NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE; SENIOR RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, BUREAU OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH, INC., A PANEL

Mr. WOODSON. Senator Denton, it is again a pleasure to testify before your committee.

I would like to state for the record that the views I am about to present are my own and do not necessarily represent those of the American Enterprise Institute or the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise. I appreciate this opportunity to speak before this Senate hearing on the research that we have been conducting

at AEI over the past 5 years on the role of mediating structures in public policy.

As you indicated in your opening remarks, there are a vast array of programs and policies that are directed toward aiding the family. However, what is often done to the family, in the name of benevolent assistance, is benevolent injury.

I would like to summarize briefly why I think this condition exists, and I know that my colleague, Bob Hill, and the other witnesses assembled here will give testimony to some positive alternatives to the problems we face.

Many of the programs and policies designed to aid the family are based on theoretical abstractions about problems. Add to this the fact that such theoretical abstractions are often advanced by people who are remote from the realities of families in the community, inevitably then we have a statistical picture of one group of people, those people who are poor, as being somehow inept and incompetent to raise their own children.

Thus, the most commonly held perceptions of poor and minority families are often based on the wrong facts. Perhaps the chief export of poor communities is bad information about themselves; information that middle class people convert into comfortable incomes for themselves.

Despite the fact that the vast majority of black families are stable, conforming, and achieving, causing few problems to anyone, the tendency in research studies has been to conduct all discussion of minority families in negative terms. Census reports on female-headed household, illegitimacy rates, crime, juvenile delinquency, and civil disorders have been incorrectly used to depict the character of minority families.

The widely disseminated Moynihan report of the 1960's is a case in point. Moynihan reviewed census figures of the time and declared that the black family is caught up in a "tangle of pathology" and is unable to prepare its children to make their way in the world. He argued that the black community is being destroyed at least as much by its own family structure as by the pressures from the surrounding society.

In the 1960's, Moynihan's thesis lent credence to a widespread assumption that low-income families, especially minority families, were little more than incubators of social problems that had to be addressed by Federal programs. This thesis still haunts policy debates and still influences professional service providers, even as the evidence continues to mount that profesionally designed and delivered programs are usually too costly, and often manage to harm the very people they are meant to benefit.

On the assumption that poor families are typically in disarray and inadequate for conducting family functions, a myriad of "services" have been created to "rescue" the children of these families from their families. Services to deal with teenage pregnancies, dependent children, and other family-related problems are popular projects and often exist in a climate of distinct antifamily and anti-child biases that seem to be a simple corollary of the "bad information" premises on which intervention in families proceeds.

We see quite a few examples of benevolent injury done in the name of helping families as in the foster care system for example;

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without going into any detail, until 1970, more than 90 percent of the native-American children in this country that were abused, neglected, or abandoned by their parents were placed in non-Indian homes. Thus we had a generation of children destroyed by being separated from their culture. It was the belief of social workers and other human service deliverers that native-American families unto themselves were incapable of caring for their children.

We find the same situation facing the 500,000 or 600,000 children in the foster home system. Over half are black or other minority. These children are in a system where the mortality rate is twice that of the national average, and where 50 percent of the children end up in the juvenile justice system, which not only costs more money to the States but also victimizes communities.

In other words, Senator, as a consequence of benevolent intervention on behalf of children of low-income people that the State is supporting with $2 billion worth of tax moneys, we are incubating our own crime problem in the name of helping the children; Senator, this benevolent injury has to stop.

We have got to end what a colleague of mine has, I think, correctly termed sentimental imperialism on the part of many human service deliverers. They must be seriously challenged if we are to stop the injury done in the name of helping children.

There are many alternatives to public intervention on behalf of children, and you will be hearing from them today. I have known some of the individuals assembled here for many years, and I have studied many of their programs, and if these same individuals were making breakthroughs in cancer research, you would see their pictures on the front page of every paper. Further, resources would be pouring in, with attempts to replicate such breakthroughs. Yet individuals such as Sydney Duncan of the Homes for Black Children have been around for 10 years and Sister Fattah, who has been operating the House of UMOJA since 1969, both offer attractive alternatives to problems that defy traditional solutions.

Unfortunately, we have not been deluged with resources—financial, administrative, or human—to address the serious crisis in hope that exists in our communities. Policymakers are not acknowledging the positive experiences of many neighborhood-based programs to influence policy. Instead, the professional community and others, I believe, are turning their backs on the rich resources in grassroots organizations and, by doing so, are denying their existence and denying many low-income children the opportunity to benefit from their efforts.

Senator DENTON. Mr. Woodson, let me say now that it is my determination to assure that that trend stops, and reverses, that the people who have been wise enough and compassionate enough to start and sustain programs, like the ones you referred to, should not only be looked to for guidance for other programs, but they should be assisted, and without robbing them of their originality or of their own suitable arrangements for the population with which they deal, which are so precise as to defy the big brother looking down through the many layers, and trying to work this out.

A lot of those people are compassionate, too, but as you say, there is an imperial attitude about it. I have seen it at the local level, and I have seen the kinds of efficacy that you are talking

about, and it is my determination as a Senator to try to get some sanity in these programs, in the manner that you just implied.

I want you to keep after me about that, if you see me getting distracted by activities over on the Subcommittee on Security or Terrorism, you keep after me, because the issue involves the security of this country more than external threats to this Nation's existence. It is we ourselves and the ability to define how we should relate to one another, and help one another relate to one another, so that we can rear children.

To me, that is where we are really dying, and if I do not address myself to it, I will be unfaithful to the reasons that brought me here. So I want you and the others to keep after me, is you see me start to slump on this.

Go ahead.

Mr. WOODSON. I would just conclude my remarks, Senator, by saying that we have and what has to end is this policy framework that makes it possible to use poor children as a convenient commodity and as a market for service-providers; the majority of the $2 billion that I refer to as spent by the Nation is for salaries and overhead, I suspect, which means that there is no incentive for change. Future policy must address this. The National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise shares your concerns, Senator, and we are committed to doing everything in our power to strengthen alternative institutions, to bring them to the attention of policymakers, and to try to secure resources so that they can flourish having the kinds of impact on this Nation that they deserve, and that the Nation deserves.

So with that I will conclude my remarks, and respond to questions later.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Woodson follows:]

HEARING ON THE EXTENDED FAMILY

United States Senate

Subcommittee on Aging, Family, and Human Services

Presented by:

Robert L. Woodson, Resident Fellow
The American Enterprise Institute
For Public Policy Research
and
President
National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise

May 11, 1982

The views I am about to present are my own and do not necessarily represent those of the American Enterprise Institute or the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise. I appreciate the opportunity to speak before this Senate hearing on my research into mediating structures as they relate to the extended family.

Social policy is understandably in search of alternatives to the expensive, guided programs that have failed to relieve social problems. It should be clear by now that these centrally planned programs, parachuted into target areas, are simply not able to engage reality at a level sophisticated enough to be effective. An approach channeled through mediating structures, in contrast, has every advantage of immediacy, relevance, dialecticity, and particularism lacking in the abstract rationality of the failed federal projects for the families and children of the poor.

Programs designed on the basis of theoretical abstractions about problems

and people always suffer the faults of remoteness and abstraction. The ability to frame a statistical picture of a run of facts does not bestow the ability to act effectively to alter the picture. In the picture constructed of poor and minority families, often the facts selected for consideration have been the wrong ones. The strengths of black families have been underestimated.

Perhaps the chief export of poor communities is bad information about themselves. Despite the fact that the vast majority of black families are stable, conforming, and achieving--causing no problems to anyone--the tendency in research studies has been to conduct all discussion of minority families in negative terms./ Census reports on female-headed households, illegitimacy rates, crime, juvenile delinquency, and civil disorders have been incorrectly used to delineate the character of minority families, ~~sui generis.~~

The widely disseminated ~~(and criticized[1])~~ Moynihan report of the 1960's is a case in point. Moynihan reviewed census figures of the time and declared that the black family is caught up in a "tangle of pathology" and is unable to prepare its children to make their way in the world. He argued that the black community is being destroyed at least as much by its own family structure as by the pressures from the surrounding society.[4]

In the 1960's, Moynihan's thesis lent credence to a widespread assumption that low-income families, especially minority families, are little more than incubators of social problems that must be addressed by federal programs. This thesis still haunts policy debates and still influences professional service providers, even as the evidence continues to mount that professionally designed and delivered programs are usually too costly, and often manage to

harm the very people they are designed to benefit. On the assumption that poor families are typically in disarray and inadequate for conducting family functions, a myriad of "services" have been created to "rescue" the children of these families from their families. Services to deal with teenage pregnancies, dependent children, and other family-related problems are popular projects and come into being with a distinct anti-family and anti-child bias that seems to be a simple corrolary of the "bad information" premises on which intervention in families proceeds.

Our child wefare services are a typical case of planned benefit gone wrong. Over 500,000 children have been, for a variety of appropriate and inappropriate reasons, removed from their homes and made the responsibility of the public child care systems. However, the welfare of these children is conducted in such a way that no one knows exactly how many of them there are, what their vital statistics are, or how many of them are completely cut off from their families.

In 1975, the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) conducted a cross-system study that confirmed the findings of a large body of research on the child welfare system--findings that continue to be true today.

The Children's Defense Fund found that funds for removal of children from homes are available; adequate funds for supportive services to families to prevent removal are not. Sometimes parents are told they must place their handicapped children in out-of-home care in order to get social services for them. They may even be told they will have to give up legal custody. When children must leave home, typically no effort is made by the system to place them with familiar relatives. Sometimes states will not pay foster

care rates to relatives, although they will to strangers.

Parents are not actively encouraged, and sometimes explicitly discouraged from maintaining contact with their children. Children are often placed at some distance from their families where it is impossible to visit them. Parents are not routinely informed about progress their children are making nor told when their children are moved, thus reducing their psychological ties with the child and lessening the likelihood of reunification. Families do not get help with the problems that led to the removal of the child.

The system shows little concern for the child's right to a family. When parental ties have been severed, often through mismanagement by the child-care agencies, legal termination of parental rights is rare, regardless of the child's current situation or needs. For children who are freed for adoption, or should be, efforts to ensure new permanent homes are everywhere inadequate. Adoption efforts are hampered by fiscal barriers to adoption, by dilatory efforts in agencies to bring foster children together with possible adoptive parents, and by embedded views that certain children--minority children, older children, and those with special medical needs--are "hard to place" and, thus, "unadoptable." Many children during their stay in out-of-home care deteriorate psychologically and socially to the point where this condition, acquired as a result of separation from family life, is declared to make them unfit for adoption or return to family life. Deterioration of the child's development during care is related to the number of years the child is kept from having a family of his own and to the number of different placements within the system he experiences. In the CDF study, 52 percent of the children had been away from home for at least two years, 20 percent of these having been there six

years or more. Eighteen percent of the children had been moved more than three times. Sixty percent of the children showed evidence of at least some injury to their personality and development.

States are neglectful parents, sometimes even abusive ones. Children in instiutional or group homes appear to be particularly vulnerable to public neglect and various forms of institutional abuse. Too many children are placed in institutional settings inappropriate to their needs. In addition, when a child is placed into congregate institutional living, even less case-worker contact is required than for children in foster homes. Despite public concern about familial abuse, there are no mechanisms to control institutional abuse of children, such as excessive use of seclusion or drug therapies, severe behavioral restrictions, and harsh physical punishment. State oversight of local practice is inadequate and ineffective regardless of whether child welfare services are administered by the state or by the local jurisdictions with the state as supervisor. Efforts to give parents, children, or foster parents an opportunity to voice criticisms of the system are almost nonexistent.

CDF concluded that:

> Families don't count. At every point in the placement process, children and their natural families are isolated from one another by the action and inaction of those with offical responsibility. Pro-family rhetoric notwithstanding, a pervasive, implicit anti-family bias shapes decisions about children at risk of removal or in out-of-home care. . . . Children don't count. Children placed out of their homes are not only likely to be cut off from their families, but also abandoned psychologically and literally by the public systems that assume responsibility for them.[4]

On the premise that poor families are often structurally deformed and

functionally inadequate, we have used public money to keep children away from any family life, to their greater detriment.

Yet the family--and no other conceivable structure--is the most viable locale for child care. In defiance of the self-styled "experts" in child care and family welfare, we should take another look at the strengths of families, especially of poor and black families who have been those most at risk of losing their children to the child welfare system. Families, even poor families in trouble--unable to meet bills, strained to maintain roles--constitute a social structure vastly more subtle, resilient, and effective for developing children than any bureaucratic substitute can ever be. Most child placements away from home are due to financial problems in their families and could be avoided were subsidies and casework with the families available. Child care experts who plan ways to improve the lives of children in troubled families remove the child instead. Their abstract guidelines for action substitute a mere pallid outline for the actual variation of the real world. Their prescriptions of what is the case and what to do about it lead not surprisingly to the inappropriate and injurious actions documented by the Children's Defense Fund research.

In contrast, families in which children are embedded are necessarily engaged in rich commerce between intimate experiences of family members, on the one hand, and the great universe of other experiences in which family realities play their parts and have their meanings, on the other. Families are mediators (mediating structures) between the stock of old ideas and world structures and new experiences. They run the constraints of the larger world and the subjective concreteness of the particular family individuals together

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with each other most felicitously and expediently. "Experts" to the contrary not withstanding, black families are not an exception to this.

The Moynihan analysis and the subsequent policies that have guided child welfare decisions have been deduced from incomplete and distorted constructions of black family realities. Not only are bureaucratic patterns for discharging responsibility for children unable in the nature of the case to mesh with actual needs of particular children, but the anti-family premises of the system strongly reflect the improper assumptions about poor and minority families on which the system was initially founded. Both facts work to the injury of dependent children.

Black families, far from being mere structural and functional deviants, form a crucial resource for black communities and their children, one that policy should respect and strive to support. Black families are a mediating structure for life-sustaining commerce between intimate personality needs and a larger world, often hostile and difficult, in which black families must make their way.

Urban minority families differ in structure from the average American family it is true. Niara Sudarkasa at the University of Michigan observes that among nuclear families, household and family are often coterminous, but among blacks, another pattern is found. Without implying any functional disorganization, Sudarkasa writes:

> Families cut across household divisions, and in many instances single households are only a part of larger family structures. One of the important implications of this fact is that census data collected for individual households cannot be taken as the most important source of information on black family organizations.[5]

In short, households without a resident adult male are not necessarily lacking some way to fulfill the economic or socialization functions allocated to the male head in the model nuclear family. Nor is it true that the death or absence of the mother is an indicator that children lack mothering. Cooperative economic activity, physical maintenance of the household, role modeling, socialization, and physical caring for the children may be tasks distributed over a number of households that share responsibility on a mutually supportive, reciprocal basis.

Robert Hill, senior research associate, Bureau of Social Research, confirms and adds to this analysis. In a study of adoption among black families, Hill finds:

> About three million children, almost half of whom are black, currently live in households of relatives, while millions more reside with relatives for shorter periods of time as a means of providing low-cost day-care services for working parents . . . One of the key functions performed by the black extended family is the informal adoption and foster care of children by grandparents, aunts, uncles and other kin.[6]

The widespread acceptance of this form of family living among American blacks suggests the adaptive function it serves. Researcher John H. Scanzoni reports:

> Partly because of structural conditions largely beyond their control, black persons face difficulties that are enormous in functioning in the white world. Similarly, the difficulties blacks face are enormous in maintaining a dominant-type conjugal family pattern.[7]

Elmer Martin, also commenting on the sub-cultural development of black extended families, found that the members are bound together by numerous ties of mutual obligation within which all the important functions of ideal nuclear-

conjugal families can be realized. The black extended family network can successfully provide family members with a humanely important sense of family solidarity and identity, allocating scarce family resources for the care of dependent family members, bestowing status and esteem on one another, defining the boundaries of deviant and immoral behavior, and teaching basic survival skills for life in poor, urban neighborhoods.[8]

The substitution of an extended family group for the nuclear-conjugal family is a widespread, adaptive response among American blacks to the stresses of their economic position. Although functionally inadequate families occur and normally functioning family groups can be thrown into disarray under crisis conditions, the model of caring networks of people, associated as if they were true families, is firmly established among urban minority populations and is more easily invoked and brought into play than policy makers and public providers commonly realize.

Moreover, the extended family form is the structural basis for the delivery of human services through groups now being called "mediating structures." Neighborhod programs in support of family needs and the needs of children mobilize and sustain cooperation for mutual support among group members on the basis of a shared, subcultural acceptance of the surrogate extended family model. These mediating structures constitute important alternatives to professional services to poor, minority groups.

The meaning of anything is its cash value. In budgeting for social programs, the key to appropriate action should be the actual results of the programs. The present foster care system has ground out a legacy of injury to children and families that is a matter of public record. But in contrast,

where a mediating structure has been delivering the same kind of service, the ineluctable human needs of children and families are ongoingly protected. The very structure of mediating groups as surrogate families is the cue to success.

I call attention here to only one example to drive home the point. In Detroit, a young social worker has organized her professional services to black children in need of adoption as if her agency were itself an extended family looking out for its own. Homes for Black Children, while still thoroughly professional, runs on the principle of a mediating structure, and has, as a result, dynamically altered the entire prospect of adoption for black children in the Detroit area. In its first year of operation alone, HBC was able to place more black children (regarded traditionally as "unadoptable" or "hard to place") than were placed in the previous year by all thirteen agencies reporting to the United Community Services of metropolitan Detroit. As a result, the other agencies of the area have now been forced to alter their own methods. The director of Homes for Black Children, Mrs. Sydney Duncan, has been asked to supervise the replication of her mediating structure approach to adoption services in eight other major American cities.

It is time we began to give public recognition to the activities of mediating structures. Where human needs are being handled through the medium of family-like group structures, the chances are very high that people are well served. Where other people are still being served through more traditional agencies, serious consideration should be given to altering the priorities of these organizations so that the rights of clients could be better protected. Finally, we should bear in mind in years of fiscal retrenchment that a mediating

structure can extend its services and benign influence to even more people with the aid of public recognition and financial support.

Footnotes

1. For a critique of the Moynihan report, see papers by William Ryan, Benjamin F. Payton, Herbert Gans, Hylan Lewis and Laura Carper collected in Lee Rainwater and William Yancy (Eds.), The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1967).

2. Daniel P. Moynihan, The Negro Family: The Case for National Action (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Planning and Research, March, 1965).

3. Children Without Homes: An Examination of Public Responsibility to Children in Out-Of-Home Care (Washington, DC: Children's Defense Fund, 1976).

4. Ibid, p. 5.

5. Niara Sudarkasa, "An Expositon of the Value Premises Underlying Black Family Studies," Journal of the Medical Association, Vol. 67, No. 3 (August 16, 1972), p. 237.

6. Robert B. Hill, Informal Adoption Among Black Families (Washington, DC: National Urban League, 1977).

7. John H. Scanzoni, "Introduction and Perspective," in The Black Family in Modern Society (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971), p. 2.

8. Elmer Marin, "A Descriptive Analysis of the Black Extended Family," Ph.D. Dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, June 1975.

Senator DENTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Woodson. It is a pleasure and a privilege to have you here again.

Dr. Colletta?

Dr. COLLETTA. I am from the University of Maryland, and I appear here today to present information on the importance of natural support systems for helping families cope with stress. My message is hopeful: Despite the bad press that the American family has been receiving most families continue to be embedded in caring networks which are able to offer support during times of crisis or stress.

At the outset let me be very clear about what that statement means. It is not meant to imply that natural support systems can solve all the problems of society, nor that the availability of such support is a justification for eliminating social welfare programs.

Where they exist, natural support systems impact positively on a wide range of feelings and behaviors. But natural support systems are limited by what they can do with a finite time, energy and financial resource base, they are also limited in that they are not equitably distributed across any population. Within any group of distressed families some will be at high risk just because they are not embedded in a support system or because their support system is unable to meet their needs.

Given these limitations we can use what we know about the existence and functioning of natural support systems to plan a partnership between public and private responsibilities for family assistance. Information that is currently available can help us to look within any group of high risk families to discover where informal support is sufficient and where it is necessary to supplement or replace it with community services.

The extended family is the most important source of such support with aid commonly being in the form of help during illness, financial assistance, child care or gift giving.

The role of friends and institutions is less clearly defined. We have some evidence that friends provide task assistance and emotional support which may supplement rather than replace family aid, particularly when family members no longer live in close proximity. In contrast to family and friends, institutions are the least preferred source of assistance, and are used when individual resources fail or are inadequate. Thus, most families prefer informal help, and seek formal services only as a last resort.

When families must cope with a crisis or ongoing problem the availability of support frequently determines whether the family disintegrates or is able to continue functioning. Numerous studies have shown that the availability of support is related to improved illness outcome, adaptation to unemployment and a decrease in psychiatric symptoms. Support for mothers is associated with favorable mother-child interaction, child adjustment, and marital satisfaction, while stress in the absence of support is related to dominant, hostile, and rejecting maternal behaviors. Mothers are more likely to express their frustrations by rejecting their children when they are unable to break the intensity of continuous interaction with their children and when they are isolated from other adults who assist with the daily routines of child care.

Despite the crucial importance of social support we have only recently begun to gather data on the amount of support needed by families in various life conditions. We have published reports on supports for families facing acute crises, such as death or long-term stresses, such as poverty. Projects currently underway will provide information on a range of family situations both here and abroad. However, the changing characteristics of American families demand that we expand our research base to include other groups of high stress families; families in which both parents must work, female-headed families, families that care for the elderly, and families headed by teenage parents.

My own research has focused on the situation of adolescent mothers and their children. We know that adolescent parents are under a great deal of stress from unemployment, poverty and marital disruption. Socially, young mothers are isolated since they have dropped out of school, lack an active social life, and feel cut off from their friends. As parents, adolescents have been described as impatient, insensitive, irritable, and prone to use physical punishment with their children. While some suggest that this intolerance may eventually take the extreme form of child abuse, others contend that some adolescents overcome their handicaps and are able to be competent mothers.

Our concern for the adolescent mother must be heightened by the realization that 20 percent of American children are born to girls still in their teens. It is obvious that we must be concerned about the conditions under which such a large percent of American children are being raised. Prompted by such a concern, I have spent the past 5 years attempting to discover what factors make the difference between adolescents who are able to overcome their problems and become competent mothers and those who are depressed, angry, rejecting and unable to cope with the demands of a small child.

The mothers I have been interviewing ranged in age from 14 to 19, had children under 2 years of age and came from a range of social class backgrounds. Contrary to stereotypes, not all lived in the inner city; they were black and white, married and single, supported by their families, their own incomes or welfare, living in a large city, suburb, or rural area.

For these young mothers the most consistent predictor of their maternal role behavior was the total amount of support they received. With high levels of support the mothers were more affectionate; showing their love by comforting, cuddling, playing with and praising their kids. With low levels of support the mothers tended to be hostile, indifferent and rejecting of their children. In addition, they were more often dissatisfied with their maternal role, and showed little understanding of the developmental needs of children.

When kinds of support are considered, emotional support, particularly from the adolescent's own family was found to be most clearly related to maternal behavior. With high levels of emotional support the mothers in our sample reported being less aggressive; less likely to nag, scold, ridicule or threaten their children. They were also less rejecting, more likely to understand the developmen-

tal needs of their children and to be satisfied with their maternal role.

On a more concrete level, the availability of support is related to the adolescent mother's ability to stay in school and to her long-term economic and educational prognosis. Comparing three groups of young mothers, those who had remained in school with the assistance of a special program for young mothers, those who had remained in school with assistance, such as child care, from their families, and those who wished to remain in school but who had dropped out, we found that young mothers who dropped out of school reported the most difficult life circumstances. The difficulty of their lives was reflected in their negative feelings about themselves and their tendency to remain passive when faced with problem situations.

Beyond the immediate impact on the mother, the provision of support has long-term implications for both the mother and her child. According to the results of other research projects, remaining in school is related to a decrease in the rate of repeat pregnancies and a decrease in the likelihood of poverty and welfare dependency.

The fact that families continue to care for their members is an optimistic note during a time when pessimism predominates. Let me finish by drawing some implications first, for the relationship between informal and formal support services, and then more specifically for the situation of adolescent mothers.

In general, no one source of assistance is adequate. Natural support systems are preferred by families and most effective at providing emotional support and responding to individual needs. They are also cost-effective and less likely to engender dependencies as they entail the obligations of reciprocity. However, natural support systems are not available to all stressed populations providers may be strained beyond their limits by the needs of their members, and may in some cases be so involved in the problem that they are unable to offer assistance.

Formal services are most effective when problems demand technical evaluation and follow-up or the objectivity that natural support systems infrequently provide. On the other hand, formal services are limited by the demands they make on public moneys, and are frequently unresponsive to individual needs.

Natural support systems and community services are best used in a complementary fashion as when social services recognize the importance of informal care, assess its strengths and weaknesses, bolster help already given and make up for the limitations of natural support to best meet the needs of families. Such collaboration recognizes the importance of social relationships, emphasizes the strengths and resources as well as the problems and needs of families and increases cost-effectiveness, accessibility, and responsiveness of services.

Let me give you an example of how one formal agency, in this case a hospital, helped create a support group by bringing parents of premature infants together once a week for 7 to 12 weeks. Minde and his colleagues reported that the meetings, staffed by a nurse and an experienced mother, provided the parents with the opportunity to compare their reactions and feelings about giving birth to a

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premature baby, gave them information about the care of their child, and helped them solve concrete problems such as securing child care. When compared to mothers of premature infants who received only routine hospital assistance, the mothers in the support group had a better understanding of their infants' condition, felt more competent as mothers, visited their infants more frequently and increased their rates of interaction with their babies. Thus, this short-term and effective support group supplemented the parents' natural network by providing them with a group that was experiencing a similar crisis.

When we look specifically at the formal and informal systems of support for the adolescent mother we may conclude that early motherhood has negative implications for any young girl. It will decrease the likelihood that she will ever finish high school, will severely restrict her employment opportunities and will make her more susceptible to feelings of depression and not being able to control her life. The problems faced by the young mother may be mitigated if she receives support, either from family, friends or from community services. Such assistance is linked to a ream of benefits; mental and physical health, more adaptive responses to problems, and improved parent-child interaction.

We have seen that if young mothers receive assistance, most often from their families, they feel less stress, are less depressed, have higher self-esteem and very, very importantly, are better able to take care of their children. This last point cannot be emphasized enough. When mothers fail to receive support, they are in turn unable to respond to their children's needs, and are likely to be hostile, indifferent and rejecting mothers.

Data such as this have particularly important implications in an era of restricted funding when public and private service agencies are unable to keep pace with demands for professional assistance and need to identify those individuals facing difficult life circumstances who are at the greatest risk. Our data indicate that resources should be concentrated on those who are isolated from the help they need to maintain their mental health and to care for their children.

Thank you.

[The following material was supplied for the record:]

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Senator DENTON. Thank you very much, Dr. Colletta.

That was fascinating, informative, helpful. We will get back to you with some questions.

Dr. Hill?

Dr. HILL. Mr. Chairman, I deeply appreciate having this opportunity to appear before you today. I am currently a Senior Research Associate at the Bureau of Social Science Research, Inc., a nonprofit research organization in Washington, D.C., under the direction of Dr. Albert H. Cantril.

I am especially pleased to be able to share with you some highlights from my research on black extended families. It is rare that I am asked to discuss some of the strengths of black families, since most social commentators prefer to concentrate on the weaknesses and deficiencies of families. Thus, you and this subcommittee should be strongly commended for holding these unique hearings to determine more effective ways that extended families, among all Americans, can be enhanced by public and private policies.

Senator DENTON. Sir, let me say at this point, if I may, that I am disposed to believe that if one were to compare the strengths of black American families and white American families, I would think that the strength would lie more with the black families, because blacks in the United States have been tempered by duress, they have been forced to come together, and to give one another support within the family.

That is not a theory, it is something I have lived with all my life. I do not mean it to sound condescending, and judging from your smiles and nods, it is not.

Go ahead, Doctor.

Dr. HILL. I appreciate that.

Most of my research on black families was conducted during the decade 1971 to 1981, that I served as the Director of Research for the National Urban League. My major monographs in this area are: The Strengths of Black Families (1972), Informal Adoption Among Black Families (1977), and Economic Policies and Black Progress (1981). Some of the key findings in those books that relate to extended families are as follows:

(1) Contrary to popular belief, there are at least five positive attributes or strengths that characterize the overwhelming majority of low-income and middle-income black families today: strong kinship bonds, strong work orientation, flexibility of family roles, strong achievement orientation and a strong religious orientation;

(2) While the number of black families living in the same households has declined sharply, the mutual support between relatives in different households remains as viable as ever. Thus, the extended family continues to be the preeminent institution for the survival, stability and advancement of black families today;

(3) One of the major functions still being performed by black extended families is the "informal" adoption, foster care and rearing of children by grandparents, aunts and uncles and other kin. About 3.3 million children, half of whom are black, currently live in the households of relatives, while millions more reside with kin for shorter periods of time as means of providing low-cost day care services for working parents;

(4) Elderly women continue to be the cornerstone of black extended families. One out of every three families headed by black women 65 years and over have informally adopted children living with them, compared to one-tenth of the families headed by white elderly women;

(5) Recent economic recessions have caused a sharp increase in the number of unemployed black female heads of families moving in or "doubling-up" with kin. Between 1969 and 1975, the proportion of children living with their mothers in extended family households jumped from 22 to 39 percent.

Some of the most disturbing findings in my research are the many instances in which Government policies actually weaken, rather than strengthen, the bonds between relatives. The Family Impact Seminar has completed a number of in-depth studies of various ways in which public policies, often unintentionally, undermine the strengths of American families. For example, until recently, Federal income tax regulations denied child care deductions to working women who had their children cared for by grandparents and other kin—despite the fact that 40 percent of women who work rely on responsible relatives for low-cost day care services.

Another "anti-family" policy is the longstanding practice of social agencies of giving priority to nonrelatives over relatives in placing children in foster care. On many occasions, children are taken away from responsible kin and placed with nonrelatives at much higher and more exorbitant costs to taxpayers. Since foster children living with relatives are more likely to be visited by their natural parents, their chances of reuniting with them are much greater than for children placed with nonrelatives.

Studies have consistently revealed that extended families provide a healthy and nurturing environment for individuals. For example, the lowest rates of child abuse and mental illness are found among children living with relatives. And findings from the University of Michigan's Panel Survey of Income Dynamics indicate that one-third, 34 percent, of the change in the total income of families headed by black women was due to economic support from relatives, while welfare accounted for only 13 percent.

It is important to point out, however, that extended families are not restricted to blood relatives. It has always included what we call fictive kin or friends, neighbors, and grassroots organizations who often provide more services than do blood kin.

However, one must be careful not to——

Senator DENTON. Excuse me, Dr. Hill. Would you repeat the paragraph before that? Because it is not in your prepared statement, and I would like to hear it again, please.

Dr. HILL. All right.

It is important to point out, however, that extended families are not restricted to blood relatives. It has always included what we call fictive kin or friends, neighbors, and grassroots organizations who often provide more services than do blood kin.

However, one must be careful not to romanticize or exaggerate the importance of extended families. Some professionals believe that since extended families take care of their own, there is no need for any Government assistance. Others feel that all services to individuals should be provided by relatives. Thus, they argue for

returning institutionalized elderly or mentally ill persons to relatives who are ill-equipped to handle them without some Governmental support. Such actions misconstrue the role of kinship networks. That economically disadvantaged persons are willing to extend their meager resources to aid kin should indicate that professional services and support are vitally needed to strengthen these self-help efforts.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the extended family is a largely untapped American resource that can be more effectively developed through imaginative and innovative public and private actions. I recommend that the following policies be seriously considered as ways of reinforcing mutual aid networks among kin:

(1) Provide greater financial incentives for placing foster children with relatives;

(2) Facilitate day care services by kin in low-income families through special tax credits and other allowances;

(3) Permit disadvantaged persons living in extended families to receive vital public benefits and social services;

(4) Provide special intergenerational support and services to elderly families that still have major child care responsibilities.

In closing, I would like to salute a woman who best exemplifies the resilience of extended families today. She is Ada Dew Williams, a long-time Washington, D.C., resident, who is the great-grandmother of a colleague of mine, Brenda Farmer. Mrs. Williams, who celebrated her 100th birthday last week is the head of an extended family that spans six generations—one of three families in the world today that is known to have that many living generations. Consequently, a special tribute is being paid Mrs. Williams this evening by the Washington, D.C., City Council, along with Mayor Marion Barry and the President of the United States.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator DENTON. Thank you, Dr. Hill. That was a touching tribute to Ada Dew Williams. I have known a number of people like that. One of them happens to be the most unforgettable character I have ever known in my life, a lady who raised a lot of kids that were not even her own color. She even adopted another child when she was 90, and raised it in the most exemplary fashion I have ever seen.

I can remember she worked as a maid to get them through college. That is what I mean by strength.

If I direct a question to one of you, I hope that the others will feel free to interject any comments you care to.

Before I get to the prepared questions, there is some relationship between this hearing and another set of hearings that we have had dealing with something that Dr. Colletta brought up, and that is the problems encountered by adolescent mothers, particularly those who are unmarried. I would appreciate it very much, Dr. Colletta, were you to comment, after some study, on the premises behind, and the bases and stipulations of the adolescent family life bill. It is interesting and relevant to observe the support that the unmarried young mother gets, and as Dr. Hill pointed out, the way the grandparents pitch in and help, and they should indeed be rewarded some way, financial incentives, or something, tax incentives, or even direct assistance.

From my point of view, it would seem so super obvious that we are ignoring the forest for the trees, that it is in all of our interests to encourage those young girls to consider the consequences of bringing another human being into this world, or taking the chance of doing so, which is equally important to them, and yet is not likely to enjoy the best family environment.

That is one thrust of the bill, as well as trying to expedite adoption, rather than abortion, as the means of treating with the problem of an unwanted pregnancy.

So I would very much appreciate the three of you, if you would, to look into that, and comment on it for us. Unfortunately this bill may not, for all I know, be funded this year, and to me that would be tragedy.

Mr. Woodson, early in your remarks, you mentioned that an approach to relieving social problems "channeled through mediating structures has every advantage of immediacy, relevance, dialecticity, and particularism lacking in the abstract rationality of the failed Federal projects for the families and children of the poor."

Would you then contend that the reasons for this effectiveness might be that these structures are closer to the people they serve, have fewer layers of bureaucracy, and are trusted by recipients of assistance?

Mr. WOODSON. Yes, there are two independent studies that support the fact that people—particularly the low-income—in times of stress and crises, seek assistance first from friends, relatives, and these institutions you describe and, as a last resort, from professional service providers. So that we as a nation are guilty of supporting the institutions of last choice of those in need.

One of the reasons that people turn to mediating institutions is because they do not treat people as clients. There is immediate reciprocity in the relationship in that you are compelled to give something back in return for what you receive. That is the basis of all friendships, such reciprocity. All of us have heard stories of a young person being helped by a friendly teacher, for example, who ends up stealing the teacher's wallet; everyone says he is ungrateful.

Yet we have found that in many types of relationships like this—where the child is constantly receiving without the opportunity to return—that it insults or injures the child. And often, anger is easier to contend with than the humiliation of always being a client.

So many of these mediating institutions provide not only the physical sustenance of the people that they serve but also a spiritual environment that nourishes the whole person. Mediating institutions offer a natural setting that is consistent with the culture and the values of those that they serve.

Senator DENTON. Dr. Colletta had a term she used, emotional support, I think is what you called it, when they get that.

Dr. Woodson, what you are referring to, the mother reacts better.

Do either of you have any comment on Dr. Woodson's response?

Dr. COLLETTA. I agree with what he is saying, about the importance of the reciprocal nature of the relationship. When we did look at community services that the teenage mothers were receiving, we found that the mothers were less likely to feel that they

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had any control over their lives, and they were more likely to be depressed, when they received community services. When they received services from their own families, they felt good about themselves, they felt in control, they felt they could do things, and go to school, and so on.

Senator DENTON. The purpose of the adolescent family life bill is to get the child involved with the family, or some part of the family, and that has not been the Government's policy. It has been more or less to deal in a sterile manner with a bureaucrat, or a grantee of the Government who has, in many cases not quite the same emotional values or orientation that we are talking about here.

Mr. WOODSON. One little footnote.

As one community person told me yesterday, the reason that they avoid grant programs is because of the tendency of these programs to label those they serve as emotionally disturbed, or delinquent, for example. In other words, people have to be pathologic in order to qualify for help.

Senator DENTON. A TV program here in Washington last night, talking about a similarly oriented Government policy, just sort of made fun of this issue that you and I are discussing with some sober gravity. They showed the kids, 14 or so, with the jukeboxes going, and "let us get physical" type disco dancing, and said anybody that tries to interfere with these kids "getting it on," learning about life, as they put it, is some kind of a nut. Some kind of a prude.

I am not trying to get in their way. I just want them to be happy the rest of their lives, and know what love is, and experience it, not just take somebody's poison, their definition thereof, and our whole society is telling them, Government, TV, movies, to a degree, and it is distressing, and I do not care how much people jump on me about it.

If I am going to be effective here, where people do not talk the way we are talking this morning, you have got to help me.

Dr. Colletta, were you going to comment further?

Dr. COLLETTA. I have some reservations.

Senator DENTON. Sure.

Dr. COLLETTA. I have seen family support systems from all ethnic groups. Our teenage mothers were black and white, and from every ethnic group in this country teenage pregnancy cuts across all layers.

Senator DENTON. Yes.

Dr. COLLETTA. I have seen when the families were involved and supportive, how effective it was. But I do not know how you legislate family involvement. I am fearful of legislating——

Senator DENTON. Well, if the Government guarantees total confidentiality, which rules the families and parents out, that is going too far. We are dealing with the very top of that tip of the iceberg. We are not getting into legislative parental involvement at all.

Dr. COLLETTA. Well, maybe a position to encourage——

Senator DENTON. That is why I asked you to look into any possible distortion that you might have of the extrapolation of intent, would be relieved.

I assure you from what you have already said, you will be on our side.

Dr. COLLETTA. I will look into it.

[The following was received for the record:]

EARLY SEXUAL RELATIONS AND PREGNANCY

The Adolescent Family Life Bill clearly intends to encourage the involvement of the adolescent's parents in problems related to early sexual relations and pregnancy. Few would argue with the importance of open communication between parents and children on such topics. However, serious reservations must be voiced about the utility of mandating parental involvement where it does not already exist. Parents are frequently not involved in decisions regarding their adolescent's sexuality because they have been for years unable to openly discuss sexuality with their children. Notification that their child is sexually active is more likely to produce family conflict than to produce instant communication.

Other reservations about this mandate include the idea that one of the most common reasons why adolescents fail to use contraception and thus expose themselves to the risk of a pregnancy is that they fear their parents discovery that they are sexually active. It is unlikely that notifying the parents would facilitate communication or decrease sexual activity. It is far more likely that the teenagers would simply fail to use any contraception or would use ineffective methods with a resulting rise in the rates of pregnancy. In fact it has been estimated that if parental notification is enforced there would be a 25 percent increase in the number of adolescent pregnancies and similar increases in the problems for the adolescent, her family and society.

Senator DENTON. Dr. Hill?

Dr. HILL. I would say that I concur with Dr. Colletta and Mr. Woodson in terms of this support from kin, which is where people turn to first. I also agree with the point that Dr. Colletta mentioned about support from public agencies as complementing the natural supports that are there rather than supplanting them. This is a primary reason why people turn to people who are close to them, that are sensitive to their particular needs.

Senator DENTON. Dr. Colletta, I think to make it clearer, what I am in favor of is developing whatever potential there is for support for the families.

If the family has not had that good a communication with the child, that does not necessarily mean that you rule out the possibility that the communications can get better. That is the premise from which this is built.

Dr. COLLETTA. I think we should also look at the peer group.

Senator DENTON. No question, we have.

Dr. COLLETTA. You mentioned adoption, encouraging adoption, which is an alternative that is not presented to many teenage mothers right now.

Senator DENTON. Ninety-seven percent have the child right now, and then they are told to take some classes so they can learn how to rear this child.

Well, in many cases, pragmatism and idealism both would mitigate toward that child being adopted, and the young mother should have the opportunity to analyze that alternative, to hear the arguments for it.

Dr. COLLETTA. Which is something that we are going to study in a new research project, what influences the adolescent's adoption decision. Because we do not know right now. It is a strong speculation among people who are working with teenagers, that their peer group is pressuring them to keep their children. So I think it is

something that we need to research further, so that we can develop some programs to present adoption as an option for adolescents who are unable to rear their children.

Senator DENTON. We have a whole section, I was just reminded, of research devoted to what you are talking about. So welcome aboard.

Again, Dr. Woodson, you state that often public policymakers suffer the faults of remoteness and abstraction.

To what extent do you think that Federal social welfare policy has been based on faulty assumptions?

Can you give any examples of this beyond the Moynihan report of the 1960's?

Mr. WOODSON. Yes, we have in the juvenile justice and prevention issue, an issue of critical concern to most citizens, an excellent example.

Very briefly, the Federal response to the crime rate among juveniles was to establish the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, which over 6 years has expended $600 million.

Most of that money did not go into efforts for low-income children who were committing the serious crimes; rather, it went to programs and efforts for status offenders, kids who commit offenses that would not be considered criminal were they adults. These were the lesser youth offenders, and 82 percent were white middle-class offenders.

One consequence of this well-intentioned effort is that, we now have a sharp increase in the number of minority youngsters in prisons, because a lot of the other kids have been taken out in the name of juvenile justice.

Again, the organizations receiving funds were not the organizations indigenous to these communities, with the serious problem; they were the traditional YMCA's, the Camp Fire Girls, the 4-H clubs—all worthwhile institutions—although the kinds of approaches pursued by such groups were based on university research. Sixty million dollars went to Harvard, Stanford, and the like, for example. Criminologists from those institutions rarely visit those communities where the problem is critical.

As long as the Congress and others who are concerned about this problem allow people at that level of abstraction to continue to design solutions that are parachuted into low-income neighborhoods, and expect citizens in those neighborhoods to participate in programs that they neither design nor contribute to, we are going to have a situation of ineffectiveness and inefficiency. I could make much the same case for manpower training programs, and many other programs as well.

Senator DENTON. You concluded, Mr. Woodson, by pointing out that the preferable route of intervention is through the medium of family-like group structures, and that where other people are still being served through more traditional agencies, serious consideration should be given to altering the priorities of these organizations.

What kind of priorities might be most appropriate?

Mr. WOODSON. One of the things that the Federal Government can do is to provide the leadership, and direction for States to relax

the many unnecessary rules and regulations that prevent these institutions from taking care of their own children and families.

We are doing some studies that we are about to release on day care, for example. This issue is of vital concern to many people, especially because of recent deaths in the so-called unlicensed homes. Our contention is that it is the regulatory structure that contributes to the deaths of these children and not the malintent of a large number of people who are trying to provide low-cost and efficient day care services. We hope to make that point in the next few months through our research.

Additionally, not only has the Reagan administration's Health and Human Services reduced its overall expenditures to day care agencies, the remaining dollars are being spent on the traditional organizations funded under the Carter administration.

Senator DENTON. Well, you can only move so fast, you know.

Mr. WOODSON. I know. But it seems to me that better and more informed targeting of these limited resources to successful homes with the potential for replication would be more sensible.

Senator DENTON. I totally agree. You go from the U.S. Treasury with some aid to that outfit, without going through 12 layers of imperial—I mean sentimentalists, in some cases sentimentalists, and in other cases other things.

Mr. WOODSON. The other thing that could be done immediately involves the research community. There is an incestuous relationship that exists between those who receive grants to deliver services and those who conduct the research.

Senator DENTON. And the lobbying groups, and not only friends that they have on staffs and Senators who cater to the votes of those constituencies, but also on the staffs at the cabinet level, and the ingrained bureaucrats there. That is what I want to change.

In the meantime we do not want people to drop through the cracks. They have to preserve the care for those who need it, and then work toward a more effective and less expensive system.

Mr. WOODSON. One of the absolute requirements of research, I would suggest, is that the people conducting the studies have no proprietary interest in the existing system and its organizational arrangements. We should seek out alternative resources, people who know the numbers, such as Dr. Hill and others, who have no proprietary interest in the industry. They should be nonindustry-based. The result—more innovation, less costly services, fewer kids being damaged, and a much healthier society.

Senator DENTON. I certainly agree with what you say, sir.

Dr. Colletta, you have stated that within any group of distressed families, some will be at high risk just because they are not embedded in a support system, or because their support system is unable to meet their needs.

You also speak of the need to divert professional services to those individuals and families at greatest risk. Is there an expeditious means of identifying high-risk families?

How would you do that?

Dr. COLLETTA. It is a difficult issue with no easy answers. Some programs try to go out and find the resources that the family has, rather than assuming that the family needs a heavy blanket of services. They look at the natural network the family already has,

frequently they draw the network together in a meeting, and take the attitude that the network knows the most about the problem. Then, going from there, the service providers will attempt to see where the gaps are in the natural support system.

But neither I, nor anyone else can give you a formula to separate high- and low-risk families. Sensitive and well-trained professionals are however able to interview a family, assess their strengths and weaknesses and determine those who are most in need of assistance. This approach is going to be more important as moneys are drying up, and as people see more and more the needs for relying on their own resources.

Senator DENTON. Do you share the opinion expressed that some of the social welfare bureaucracies have tended to usurp the functions traditionally performed by the family, or by sort of spontaneously born local community support systems?

Dr. COLLETTA. Yes, I think so.

In some cases it is assumed that the teenager should go on welfare when she is 3 months pregnant, when in most cases it is not absolutely necessary. I have talked to numerous families to whom a welfare agent has come in and said you need our help, you cannot handle your problems. And going into families' homes and talking to them, we nearly got ejected from a number of homes, because the teenager's father thought that we were there to provide welfare for his daughter. I remember one father saying, "I can take care of my own girl and her baby." However, once we told that father that we were trying to understand the things that made it easier or more difficult to be parents, and that we viewed them as the experts it was 6 hours before the family stopped telling us what their family was doing for itself and what they needed, which was not welfare.

Senator DENTON. Dr. Colletta, you have demonstrated in your research with adolescent mothers that emotional support was found to be most clearly related to maternal behavior, and that the adolescent's family was the best source of emotional support.

Do you have any suggestions about how this emotional support can be encouraged?

Dr. COLLETTA. The few programs for teenage mothers which have involved their own mothers and used their advice as an expert, as someone who knows something about child rearing, who knows how to help the daughter, who can come in and help, these programs that involve the teenager and her mother have proven to be most effective. Where the programs exclude, or make no active effort to include the maternal grandmother, even if the program is teaching the girl good child care techniques, and they discover that the adolescent is following her mother's advice not what the program has taught.

Senator DENTON. Well, I think that is the way we are going in the program to which I referred, and I would solicit your interest and advice in it.

Dr. Hill, you stated in your testimony that about 3.3 million children currently live in the households of relatives, while millions more reside with kin for shorter periods of time as a means of providing low-cost day care services for working parents.

Do you believe there are any advantages or disadvantages of children staying with kin while their parents work as opposed to being placed in a federally funded day care center?

Dr. HILL. Well, I think I would be reluctant to make a universal statement, because different families are in different situations. But the preference of most families is to have a child cared for by someone whom the child feels very comfortable with, and with whom the parent has confidence, that that child will be cared for adequately while the parent is working.

In most instances, that is a relative, or a close friend, neighbor, who is also, as I said, part of an extended family. The closer they are to that family.

So that when you look at most of the statistics on child care, you find that public day care centers were not utilized because of the preference for relatives.

Now, in some circumstances where that is not possible, I do think an option of some type of child care facility should be available. But I also think it should be run by those persons in that community close to those kinds of families. So that again the family can feel secure in terms of the quality of care that the child is receiving.

Senator DENTON. It might be important to point out that day care centers are the repository of children belonging to those who are not necessarily economically disadvantaged. I was the commandant of an institution in which that was taking place, and we, the Government, were paying for the people supervising the day care center.

It occurred to me, after I was there a couple of years, that maybe the Federal Government should not be funding that, and I suggested that the ladies do as our wives did, when I was part of the institution. That is, let the wives get together and supervise those children at no cost to anyone, except at the sacrifice of time.

There was a great uproar, and almost mutiny. But the next year that is the way they did it, and the next year after that. So it went better, and it did not cost anybody anything.

Would that meet with your approval?

Dr. HILL. Yes, I think that given that type of alternative, it would be one.

Senator DENTON. I recognize Dr. Colletta, that the blacks have been under duress, 300 years on this North American Continent.

Therefore, I believe it is a natural consequence, that is why they have, in my opinion, stronger families, a greater religious belief, and yet they are pictured as just the opposite. They take the exemptions which are the unfortunate consequences of some of that duress, also.

Dr. COLLETTA. My objection is that generalizations can be very misleading.

Senator DENTON. I agree.

Dr. COLLETTA. We need to look at family variations, not racial backgrounds.

Senator DENTON. There are going to be Italian families that have that duress, and German and Irish.

Dr. COLLETTA. There are also cultural norms. There is something called network orientation. This is the idea that it is good, useful,

and productive, to rely on other people, or that it is to your detriment to be involved in a reciprocal relationship, that you should not, or cannot rely on others for assistance. This norm frequently varies from ethnic group to ethnic group and is related to what you have seen modeled in your own family history as well as to your need for assistance or the amount of stress you are under.

The Italian American family is one good example that is very involved in the kin network, and are as supportive. So I would like to——

Senator DENTON. Sure, and I acknowledge that.

I just want to help dispel the myth about all the kids running around in the streets, and the weakness in the family in the black communities. There is a specter of that, and I do not agree with it, and I would say to that, you do not have to be under financial duress, you can find duress from your conscientious involvement in your love of children, you can be very wealthy, and under no apparent duress and still be willing to sacrifice yourself and your time, and give your compassion and love to a child.

That could come from a rich white, or a rich black, or rich Arabian family, although duress tempers one. It is just that we human beings do not tend to lift ourselves by our bootstraps that much to impose discipline, unless we are forced to, I am afraid.

As a general trend, at least, that is in my own case. I was somewhat tempered by some duress, and yet before then, I was able to summon up some sense of tempering from my own conscience, to make me realize that things should not be that easy, that I just do what I want for the moment.

I think we are dealing with that sort of thing.

Dr. Hill, has any of your research in the extended family indicated that in those households headed by black women, 65 years and over, that there were mutual benefits to the children, and to the elderly persons involved?

Dr. HILL. Yes, clearly, with respect to both the women and the children, as shown not only by my research, but by the research done of others as well.

I mentioned that the lowest instances of child abuse is found in families in which they are reared by relatives. Also, it is suggested that some of the lowest levels of mental illness impairment tends to be in children reared by relatives.

So that regarding the quality of the environment for these young people we find very positive impact of extended families. On the part of the elderly and other persons who are rearing them, many of whom are not elderly, we also find positive benefits. For example, you asked about the motivation rearing them. It is due to a very high emphasis on caring for children. Some of these women no longer have children and wanted to have the comfort, and responsibility of being able to provide the kind of support that they felt was needed. So it was a very important self-gratification.

I do want to emphasize that the older these women are, there is a need for some support from outside sources. For example, my research revealed that many young people who were informally reared by grandparents were not able to qualify for social security beneficiaries upon the death of a grandparent, because either the child was not adopted, or a will had not been made in terms of

legal beneficiaries. So the child was raised all their lives, and no one told this older person what they should do in terms of being able to legalize certain relationships with those children.

This is why I think I feel that the extended family is an important resource, but it also need's some support in providing adequate care.

Senator DENTON. I certainly understand, and I appreciate that answer.

Lest there be any lingering question about my own orientation about single parents, I was raised by my mother alone. My mother and father were divorced. My mother was a splendid parent. I often say there are more heroines in households than heroes in all the battlefields of history. I feel that way toward single parents, be they male or female, who hang in there and rear their children, because without them we would have no nation, and I acknowledge, in my own life, the great help of my grandparents, of teachers, of clergy, of friends, and they need to be there, and I would have gotten into more trouble without them.

I would have been one of the people with whom our next witness, Sister Fattah had to deal and I am sure I would have been dealt with skillfully and effectively. So I do not feel as if I am in any particular nuclear family environment, looking askance at people who have problems, and when I say we have to understand a single family, I mean all that that word "understand" implies.

Thank you very much for your testimony this morning.

Our next panel has two witnesses who have conducted successful service programs on the grassroots level, and they have done this spontaneously, from the good will within them, which I think is the best and most reliable source for reliance, and as the nucleus from which to build, both in terms of ideas, procedures.

So I would like to welcome Sister Falaka Fattah of the House of Umoja in Philadelphia and Ms. Sydney Duncan of Homes for Black Children in Detroit.

Sister Fattah, if you would proceed, and then Ms. Duncan. You may feel free to synthesize your opening statement, because all of it will be included in the record, and that would give us more time for dialog.

STATEMENTS OF SISTER FALAKA FATTAH, DIRECTOR, HOUSE OF UMOJA, PHILADELPHIA, PA.; AND MS. SYDNEY DUNCAN, DIRECTOR, HOMES FOR BLACK CHILDREN, DETROIT, MICH., A PANEL

Sister FATTAH. I am grateful for the opportunity to give testimony this morning, Senator, on a subject that I have used as a part of a program at the House of Umoja for several years. Our extended family consists of those youth who most people would rather not deal with——

Senator DENTON. Do you in the back of the room hear Sister Fattah?

Would you put that microphone closer to you?

Sister FATTAH. Is this better?

I said that our family at the House of Umoja consists of those youth that people would rather not deal with. They are not the runaways, they are the throwaways, and they are, in many in-

stances, the hard core delinquents that have been program resistant to others.

These youth, by and large, have come from various gangs, and the gang structure itself is an extended family. What we have done is simply included ourselves into that particular family, which was created by the youth themselves.

Many people, when they look at the gang structure, see only the pathology, as has been stated before, when looking at other kinds of families, but gangs are a support mechanism for some street youth who have, for whatever reason, not been able to find that type of support within their nuclear family.

By becoming a part of the extended families of gangs, it has been a tremendous learning experience for us. For instance, their system of justice. I would like to give an example of something that occurred last week.

We have a young man who was accused of stealing some money from a person who had befriended him, and the case was not reported to the police, it was dealt with at the House of Umoja, through a system which we call the Adella System (phonetic), which is an Arabic word meaning just and fair. The complaints system works when everybody is honorbound during the session to tell the truth. They can lie all week, but for these few hours they must tell the truth.

This was established because it would take us forever to shift through lives. Basically the case imvolved who was actually the guilty person. The person who offered the opportunity for the money to be stolen, or the youth who might have taken that opportunity; the rationale of the young man involved was that this particular person had a tendency to do two things which they considered to be wrong.

No. 1, they flashed their money in the ghetto. They had huge sums of money, and they had been doing this over a period of time. The only reason that nothing had occurred before was because the youth respected the fact that this person was being very helpful to us.

The second rationale was that in terms of the person, he had been helpful, but had always spoken about it. In other words, he was constantly reminding the youth that he was the person who had kept him from going to jail.

I thought when Bob Woodson spoke about what happens when you try to—with the relationship, try to think that people are going to forever go down to their knees, that is not in fact what happens. People become angry.

The decision that came out of this group was that the person who flashed the money was in fact the most guilty, because if you constantly put temptation in the way of a person who has nothing, it is just simply too much temptation for that person to deal with, that type of logic I am sure would never work well in the court system.

Senator DENTON. Especially that temptation of flashing the money, spiced by a little arrogance and condescension.

Sister FATTAH. Yes, I am using this because it was a learning experience for the youth themselves, because the outcome was that they would make sure that anyone who is coming and offering as-

sistance, that they would be told when they come, that we prefer that from now on this will be a policy at the House, they will be told, whoever they are. This is something that we would prefer not happen.

The same type of thing came about during our carwash. We have a carwash at the House, where people are able to come and get their cars washed, and the youth earn extra money.

A lady came in with a new car, she gave the keys to one of the young men, and she said just deliver my car after you have cleaned it. Well, he did deliver it, but he delivered it 2 hours later, with a ticket. She was dealing with young men who may never be able probably to purchase that type of car. It is better if you did not put temptation in their way.

The rationale that the youth use makes sense to them, and it is certainly in terms of teaching young people, in terms of what is right and what is wrong. They did not say that the person who took the car, or took the money, was correct. They said it was wrong, but they also were able to see other wrongs in the situation.

The surrogate family at the House of Umoja actually functions this way, where the young people are able to have some determination about what goes on in their lives. If it had been in a more formal social agency, the young person would have been called in, he would have been told about his particular guilt, he would probaly have had explained to him what would happen if he ever did anything wrong like that again, the threat of going back to jail would have been laid on him, and then if he did it, then he would probably be on his way back to jail.

At the House of Umoja, we lean also very heavily, not just on their own system of justice, but also on what we feel are natural attributes of the African family. We lean very heavily on African heritage, it's a way of teaching young people that they have an obligation, not only to themselves, but they have an obligation to their people.

So we are alwavs drawing parallel stories for them. Such as, it's important that you have good friends in school, but it is important for you to study. For instance we need doctors, and we go back to the origins of medicine, and give them information about Timbuktu, where the first eye surgery was performed. This information is not given to them within the regular school setting.

So we feel this is important. But I think the most important part of what we are doing at the House of Umoja is loving, caring. Many of the young people have come from a hostile atmosphere, where they have a feeling that they are city or State property, and they are clients of the service, but they are not loved.

So what we do is let them simply understand that we care what happens to them, even if they do not make it, that it is just as important to recycle human beings as it is to recycle materials.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Sister Fattah follows:]

THE EXTENDED FAMILY AS A REHABILIATION TOOL

For Delivery
Tuesday, May 11, 1982
Senate Hearing
Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C.

Sister Falaka Fattah
President
House of UMOJA

A distinct characteristic of African music is a call and response. Delinquent behavior by youth is a call for help and the correct response is love, support and concern.

According to James R. Cox of the Youth Services Bureau in Los Angeles, Calf. where gang deaths occur in epidemic proportions, "The state of being black, under oppressive conditions, places our children and all black persons at risk".

The incidence of high blood pressure and the increased suicide rate are just a few indications. The costs of being black are just higher. It costs us economically, physically, and mentally. It costs us in terms of premature births, numbers of persons in prison, and the multitude of opportunities our children never receive. Therefore, black children need what all children need, and something extra:

Black children need caring, aware adults who understand the meaning of being black and of being human, to assist them to retain their humanity and not succumb to the feelings of self-hatred explicated by Fanon in "Black Skins, White Masks, or in Kardiner's "March of Oppression".

Black children need caring, aware adults who will become advocates on their behalf to change social conditions, making it possible for them to lead productive lives.

Black children need adults who know how to build their self-esteem support positive self-concepts and self-image development, and communicate the contributions of black people to this country.

Black children need to be with people who appreciate, care about, and support their unique way of obtaining mastery and developing a sense of individuality.

Black children need adults who will support them in their efforts to learn creative, not self-destructive ways of confronting a hostile environment which attempts to crush their humanity and individuality.

At the House of UMOJA we have attempted to fill this needs agenda within our traditional African extended family concept and within our Boystown environment of twenty-three houses.

This attempt is expressed in our daily activity agenda, which begin at 5:30a.m. with a wake-up knock at the bedroom door, which is followed by a half-hour morning conference geared to motivation for the day.

My paternal grandmother once told us that when the sun comes up, it's time to get up! I took her literally and told the family one morning that God had turned on the light switch and everyone laughed.

But, the habit of early rising has persisted to this day and has been instilled at UMOJA.

Taking time to prepare your mind for the day instead of stumbling into it, gives a clear sense of purpose and direction.

The next activity is breakfast which is prepared by my youngest son, David. He learned how to cook from my mother and myself and he knows that the kitchen is the most important room in the house.

Many of our youth have serious emotionally problems centered around food and the lack of proper nutrition.

We deliberately do not serve sweets or coffee at UMOJA; we believe there is a link between poor nutrition and criminal behavior.

Also, the socialization of meeting and eating together builds kinship and a sense of well being so necessary to performing well at school or work.

After breakfast, between the hours of 10a.m.- 12noon and again between 1p.m.-3p.m., the youth at UMOJA, who do not attend neighborhood schools are taught at UMOJA Free School.

Their instructor comes to us and is paid by Community College; he formerly taught in prison. His classroom size never exceeds ten students at a time, which contributes to their understanding and education.

He drills them well in basic Math and English to fill in the gaps left incarceration.

Also, if one of our residents who attends the neighborhood school is suspended he must report directly to our teacher at UMOJA, so that his educational process continues.

Our one on one counseling is done throughout the day by family members, counselors whose expertise is that they are rehabilitated ex-offenders coupled with professionals, consisting of a social worker and part-time psychologist.

Our use of professional has recently developed in our fourteen year history and we have made sure that they too fit into the "familyhood" of UMOJA.

The proper use of leisure time is a combination of structured and unstructured activities. They range from weekly attendance at the "Y" to theatre-going and sports teams.

However, we feel that a unique part of our familyhood responsibility is community service. We deeply feel that our youth must be providers of service as opposed to recepients of service.

Nothing at the House of UMOJA is given either. Everything must be earned at UMOJA from allowance, emergency needs or the name you are called.

Opportunities abound at UMOJA for employment and skills training either with our Construction Co., Car Wash, Security Co., or Hauling Co. Therefore, the needs and wants of youth at UMOJA are met thru honest labor on their part.

Conflicts within the UMOJA family are resolved thru mediation sessions held on a weekly and emergency basis.

Only one youth-resident at UMOJA has been arrested in 1982 despite the fact that we accept the hard core delinquent which most agencies will not deal with.

This stands in sharp contrast to the dramatic image created by the media of young, violence- prone career criminals, which terrorize our communities and that rehabilitation does not work.

We stand ready to face the tide of juvenile crime because we know they can and will respond to familyhood and community if we perserve with patience and lovingly concern.

The confirmation of our method came this year with the wining of two top national awards from the National Association of Blacks. In Criminal Justice and the National Black American Law Students Association.

Therefore, we continue on encouraged in our extended family rehabilitation model and recommend for further study Robert L. Woodson's book, "Summons To Life" in which the House of UMOJA is a case study.

This book was written after three years of research and involves interviews of former residents. The publisher of "Summons To Life" is Ballinger Press.

Senator DENTON. Well, I have heard a lot of off-the-top-of-the-head testimony, Sister Fattah, but I have never heard any more lucid and wise than that.

Thank you.

Ms. Duncan?

Ms. DUNCAN. Thank you very much, Senator Denton, for the opportunity to speak about my experience with Homes for Black Children in Detroit.

It is my impression that I have been invited to share that experience with you today because of our success in placing black children for adoption. Homes for Black Children began in 1969, and in our 12-year history we have placed more than 800 children in families. The age range of the children has been from newborn to 15 years of age. We have placed as many as six children, sisters and brothers together, in one family.

At the time we started, in 1969, it was thought that black families did not adopt, and that there was not a resource for children who were in the care of the agencies. We found a way of saying to the country, what black people have always known, that blacks do nurture and rear unrelated children.

Everyone who is black knows someone who has reared a child that is not his. That was a part of our heritage, as was the concept that children belong to the community. This could be seen at the end of slavery. Slavery was a time when children were separated from their families, and at the end, many children were left not having any idea where their parents were. They were organized into families, and that history and practice has continued. It has not been recognized because it has not been formal. Nevertheless, it is caring for unrelated children.

There is a category of black children in large numbers, and nobody knows exactly what the number is, now being parented by the State. Most of these children are in large cities.

For example, in the city of Washington, D.C., on any given day there are approximately 2,000 children that are being parented by the State. In Philadelphia, on any given day, there are approximately 5,000 children in care authorized by the city. In Chicago, on any given day, there are approximately 11,000 children who are in the care of the State. There are 6,000 of them in foster homes, and 5,000 in institutions, and when we go to New York, on any given day, there is an average of about 35,000. Nobody knows that exact number.

A disproportionate number of these children are black, and there are many different reasons for it, but more than anything, for black children, it has been a one-way highway into the system, and no way out. We feel that although there are many reasons for this, one of the main causes is related to the role the State has assumed; the government has assumed in the lives of these children the maintenance task, the day-to-day care. The public agency sees that there is a roof over their head, and the public agency sees that there is food in their mouths, but there is not attention being given to the role of planning for the long-term well-being of these children. If we look at what happens to children who have been parented by the State, the record does not look very good.

A disproportionate number of these children end up in difficulties with the law. A disproportionate number of these children end up as adults unable to take care of themselves; a disproportionate number end up in our institutions.

The human waste is just phenomenal, not to mention that this is a very costly system. We are spending large sums of money, and we are not buying very much with our money, in terms of effectiveness.

The National Center for Homes for Black Children grew out of the recognition that in Detroit we had provided an alternative for these children. The National Center is funded by Health and Human Services, over a period of three years, at the rate of $200,000 a year. The purpose of the National Center is to allow us the opportunity to share the experience of what happened in Detroit with seven other cities, and give technical assistance in developing similar types of programs.

The cities are Chicago, Cleveland, Kansas City, St. Louis, Washington, D.C., Orlando, Fla., and Philadelphia. Over a 3-year period, $50,000 will go to each of those seven cities. So that 70 percent of the funding actually goes directly into the local projects. With that "seed money" the local projects are to seek, funding sufficient to launch a program to pace 100 children in permanent homes during the project's first year of operation. We are interested in launching projects that will serve a total of 700 children in seven different cities.

In each of these cities the children have been identified. I am talking about 700 children, whose ages and names we already know, and for whom the foundation has been laid for offering the service to place them in permanent living arrangements. At this point in time the cities are in various stages of development of the actual project. The National Center for Homes for Black Children holds some basic beliefs about the care of children. One is that every child has the need for a family. The way we can meet that need of these children is to act immediately when their parents fail For example, a child for some reason may come to the attention of the police at 2 o'clock in the morning, and our feeling is that by 8:30 the next morning, or 9 o'clock, somebody ought to be out there finding what happened to cause this child to be in this situation, and within 30 days we ought to have enough information that we can begin to plan for that child.

Three months is time enough to know and to have some plan underway, and that within 1 year any child who has come to the attention of the public, as in need of their service, ought to be settled in some permanent living arrangement.

The fact that this does not happen, I think is just simply because we as a society tolerate this public neglect of children. If a child breaks his leg today, it is not acceptable to wait 1 year to get medical care. Yet this happens to children in times of crisis, even in Detroit, and Michigan is a State in the forefront of good child welfare practice. A child may remain in foster care for 200 days, without some planning being done. For these children there can be and there has to be some other alternative.

There are some other beliefs, we hold but I am afraid I am running out of time. Quickly may I say that black children are desir-

able, and they are not "hard to place." They do not have to remain in the care of the State. They do not have to be raised by the State. This has happened, because there has not been an awareness of the history of black children.

There are many barriers that are systemic. Alternatives for children ought to be based on the needs of the children, and not by programs, or whatever is the "going answer."

For example, when foster care started, and it met a need, but somewhere along the way it became a system unto itself, and rather than fostering the original ties of that child, or the development of new ties, it became a "way of life" for children. After foster care, adoption became the answer. True, for many children the answer is adoption, but there are children for whom adoption is not the answer.

There are other children now in the system in need for adoption, because the planning was not done very early, when the child entered the system. At that time there may have been a grandmother or aunt available, if someone had explored the possibility. Guardianship might be appropriate for some of these children. Plan for the needs of the children, not according to what is considered to be "the answer of the day" or the fashionable program of the moment.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Duncan follows:]

TESTIMONY

PRESENTED TO:

SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGING, FAMILY AND HUMAN SERVICES

May 11, 1982

SUBJECT:

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR HOMES FOR BLACK CHILDREN

- WHAT IS IT?
- WHAT IS ITS FUNCTION?
- WHAT ARE ITS BELIEFS ABOUT DEVELOPING PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENTS FOR BLACK CHILDREN?

PRESENTED BY:

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INTRODUCTION

I am Sydney Duncan, President of Homes for Black Children of Detroit, Michigan, and Director of the National Center for Homes for Black Children. It is my understanding that I have been asked to report on the National Center for Homes for Black Children because we in Detroit have demonstrated what black people have always known -- *Black Families Nurture Unrelated Black Children.* That statement -- *Black Families Nurture Unrelated Black Children,* could be a newspaper headline which would be news to some people and for others it is a fact taken for granted. Even though that proposed headline, *Black Families Nurture Unrelated Black Children,* is a true statement, currently many black families are not being given the opportunity to become permanent parents for black children who are wards of the court.

The staff at Homes for Black Children in Detroit has been able to find homes for black children. Because of the staff's successful experiences, the Board of Directors of Homes for Black Children of Detroit expressed to the Children's Bureau of Health and Human Services its willingness to found a National Center for Homes for Black Children.

WHAT IS THE *NATIONAL CENTER* FOR HOMES FOR BLACK CHILDREN?

The National Center for Homes for Black Children is a project sponsored by Homes for Black Children of Detroit and funded by the Department of Health and Human Services; $200,000 per year for three (3) years. The National Center was created in September, 1980 to develop projects similar to Homes for Black Children of Detroit in seven (7) other urban areas of the United States. In the first year of each project's operation, 100 children are to be placed. After fifteen (15) months of activity on this project, seven (7) cities have been identified as members of the National Center:

- *Chicago, Illinois*
- *Cleveland, Ohio**
- *Kansas City, Kansas*
- *St. Louis, Missouri*
- *Washington, D. C.*
- *Orlando, Florida*
- *Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

The projects are being developed in social agencies by individuals who are known as *"Fellows"* of the National Center. The sponsoring agency in each city is granted a Fellowship in the amount of:

A. $10,000 for 1981.

B. $20,000 for 1982.

C. $20,000 for 1983.

Seventy percent (70%) of the total budget of $200,000 is allocated to local programs for the placement of the children. It was facetiously said to agency executives when they agreed to become members of this National Center, that they might be having their first experience in receiving a *"block grant"*.

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* Harambee, the sponsoring agency in Cleveland is presently not affiliated with the National Center. (April 20, 1982).

These grants are made to agencies if evidence is given that specific conditions are met that will assure the development of a project that will place one-hundred children (100) during the project's first year of operation. Agencies must meet certain conditions because a mere willingness to find homes for black children does not mean that children will be placed. In the very complicated and very different child welfare systems in each of these seven cities, just identifying the children and referring them to such a project requires inter-agency maneuvering that can be achieved only by adroit leaders steeped in common sense economics, political ingenuity and the knowledge of a century and a half of child welfare history, nationally and locally. . . . Which agency has the black children in care? . . . Who is paying the foster care bill? . . . Have the parental rights been terminated? These are the fundamental questions that have to be answered before this project can operate. During the first fifteen months of the existence of the National Center, at least one-hundred (100) children have been identified in each city and inter-agency referral procedures have been established. In the past, some agencies have solicited funds to take care of black children, and after securing the money, have been told that no children needed to be referred. This was said even though public child care funds continued to be spent year after year for particular children.

WHAT IS THE *FUNCTION* OF THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR HOMES FOR BLACK CHILDREN?

Homes for Black Children of Detroit did not create this National Center merely to place 700 more black children. At the time the Adoption Opportunities Act was passed, the Board of Directors of Homes for Black Children realized that perhaps they should be making a contribution of national significance to the needs of black children who are without homes. They recognize a national responsibility because of their successful experience in finding permanent homes for children in the City of Detroit. As Ruth Carlton, Columnist for the *"Detroit News"* has said:

> *"Homes for Black Children revolutionized adoption in Michigan. Before this agency was opened in 1969, black children accounted for 1 adoption in 15, although 58% of the out-of-wedlock births were to black mothers.*
>
> *"Enter -- Homes for Black Children. Within two years it had placed 272 children and had approved homes waiting. The oldest of these children was 12. More important, it demonstrated to other agencies that black families do adopt, and soon they, too, began placing black children. . ."*

Now, twelve years later, more than 800 children have been placed. Their ages have ranged from newborn to 15 years, with as many as 6 in a sibling group. This is the reason there is a *"winning attitude"* at Homes for Black Children. Out of this *"winning attitude"*, this national project was conceived.

How many black children are there in the United States who need permanent living arrangements or adoption? When Dawn Day, author of *THE ADOPTION OF BLACK CHILDREN* asked that question she found that the incredible answer to that question was that no one knew with any certainty. Dawn Day went on to establish the fact that there are many black children awaiting permanent homes. Furthermore, as long as

there is a *backlog* of black children awaiting adoption, there will be other black children living in foster homes and institutions who also need permanent homes, but the agencies and courts do not bother to free them for adoption because no homes are said to be available. In other words, temporary wards of the court are not made permanent wards for reasons unrelated to the children's need for parents. Often when black children first become known to social agencies, it is assumed that if the child's natural parent cannot care for him/her, no one wants to be the permanent parent.

Recognizing that the need for permanent living arrangements for black children is a national problem, urban social agency executives and their staffs have confirmed the validity of the function of the *National Center* for Homes for Black Children. Black children who have been in so called *"temporary foster care"* for years need national attention. The National Center has generated a *"new hope"*. The *"new hope"* is not only for the 700 specific black children whose names and ages we now know, but also for all black children who will come into government care in the future. If Fellows of the National Center have the opportunity to carry out projects to make permanent living arrangements for 700 specific children, the Fellows will have shown that black children are not destined for permanent state care when their birth parents cannot nurture them.

Finally, It is important to describe another feature of the National Center for Homes for Black Children: the design for its creation calls for its demise at the end of three years. The National Center is not another organizational structure to be added to the child welfare system of agencies. When the Center's objectives have been met, the need for the Center will not exist. The National Center was not created to have a long life ot its own, but to complete a task -- TO PLACE 700 CHILDREN AND, CONSEQUENTLY, TO PROVE THAT IT IS NOT AN INEVITABLE OR PERMANENT FUNCTION OF THE STATE TO PARENT BLACK CHILDREN.

WHAT ARE THE *BASIC BELIEFS* THAT GUIDE THE ACTIVITY OF THE NATIONAL CENTER ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENTS FOR BLACK CHILDREN?

• *SOCIAL WELFARE SYSTEMS CHANGE THROUGH* ACTION *NOT STUDY.*

When the National Center was established and its goal was to create projects in seven urban areas that would place 100 black children during the first year of operation, the planning was based on the principle that change in the child welfare system will come about through *"doing something"* and not through *"studying"* and *"talking"* about the system. The plan was to place black children, a significant number of black children, in order to make the point that *"Black Families Do Nurture Unrelated Black Children"*.

There are many complex legal, economic and social reasons why many black children are in foster care with no permanent living arrangements. The child welfare literature calls all these reasons *"barriers to permanency"*. Included in the list of identified barriers are the following:

1. Society will tolerate and accept a black child being cared for by the government for all of his/her childhood.

2. Permanent custody of some children is not taken by the court because black adoptive families are thought to be unavailable.

3. Public welfare agencies which have the children in care do not have the time to find the families, even if they thought the homes were available.

4. The private agency foster family has become the psychological parent and wants to continue the relationship without making a permanent commitment to the child.

5. The child is considered too disturbed to be adoptable. Adoption

and permanent living arrangements are thought by some to be unsuitable if the child has been identified as a psychiatric or psychological problem.

6. Juvenile court dockets are unwieldy in most large cities. Since large numbers of children need court attention, it may take six months to get a hearing; minor legal problems can cause further long delays.

7. Many Judges experience conflict between *"justice for parents"* and *"protection of a child's need for a permanent family"*. The *"case is continued"* when the Judge cannot resolve this conflict. Consequently, the decision is made by default and the child remains without a permanent living arrangement. The competing interests of the parent, the child and the state have to be balanced constantly.

8. Money is sometimes available for foster care, but not for placement planning.

These problems are not, of course, applicable only to black children. However, they impact disproportionately on the black child. The barriers that keep a particular child from a permanent home need to be understood and surmounted. These *"barriers to permanency"* will be weakened by taking one child at a time through that barrier-laden territory of the child welfare system. When 100 children in each city have been placed, all segments of the child welfare system, the courts, the public agencies and the private agencies will begin to operate differently.

During the first year of operation of Homes for Black Children (1969) 135 children were placed; the next year 137 were placed; the third year 100 and the fourth year 60. Three years ago Homes for Black Children placed only 16 children. The black children placed by Homes for Black Children were in the foster care of child welfare agencies which could not find adoptive homes for them. When Homes for Black Children demonstrated that permanent homes were available, the agencies began to place the children for whom they had custody and had a diminishing need to make referrals to this specialized project.

When 700 black children have been placed within one year, the point will have been made that the child welfare system can change.

· *CHILDREN NEED TO BE REARED BY FAMILIES, NOT BY THE STATE.*

This conviction that permanent living arrangements must be found is based on another belief: children should not be reared by the state. Even though children are being cared for by private agencies, public agencies are paying for their bed and board. The voluntary agencies, through purchase of services, are becoming subsidiary state agencies. *It is appropriate for the state to plan for children when the natural parents cannot assume their role, but the state should not become the parent.* If this principle could be firmly fixed as a societal norm, some of what happens to children by default would not occur.

Recently two children were left in foster care by a mother who left Michigan to go to Texas to find her own foster parents. She was not functioning well as a parent before she left Michigan. Workers found her personality quite unattractive and she seemed to be completely without potential for parenthood. When she went to Texas, perhaps the workers were relieved to have her out of their way. Even though the children missed their mother, the workers really did not want to find her because the state had made a plan for the children that seemed more satisfactory than when they were being bothered by the children's mother. This illustrates a belief that the state can be a better parent than the mother -- just forget her. Thus, by default, these children will continue in the care of the state while the issue of their need for a permanent home is not being faced by the mother or the court.

· *BLACK CHILDREN ARE DESIRABLE AND ARE NOT "HARD TO PLACE".*

In addition to our ideas about systems change and the proper role of the state in relation to children, we believe that black children who need permanent homes will have them, if we confirm the fact that black children are desirable and not *"hard to place"*. Some black children have a *"special need"* or perhaps two *"special needs"*, but these are not the characteristics that best describe the children. This idea is important to us because it is a part of a larger belief that social services should be developed and named not for pathology but for desired outcomes. The desired outcomes for our national project are Homes for Black Children.

Many of the children who need attention came into the care of the state for protective services. That fact we accept. However, if we present to ourselves and others *"neglected and abused children"*,

we may give the impression that the children are irreparably or necessarily damaged. As a consequence, we can fail to see them as healthy, joyous, growing children who have the capacity to give satisfaction to adults.

In recent years, in many areas of social work, there has been a fascination with pathology and morbid behavior as programs have been named for wife beating or spouse abuse, family violence and drug abuse. Pathology has to be found to finance these social programs.

In this particular national project we are not focusing on the pathology of individuals or agencies; we are finding homes for black children. We believe that such action to find homes for black children may make it possible eventually for black children to be assured of having plans started for their permanent care on the first day they are separated from their natural parents. We hope that the planning and service offered will enable the children to regain their birth parents.

It is sometimes very difficult to find strengths in the natural family or natural extended family. However, we have observed that, when permanent custody hearings are scheduled, the extended family members often emerge to claim the children. The social workers have to acquire confidence in their ability to help natural parents. Poverty, drugs, alcohol, character disorders, mental retardation, absence or lack of environmental supports and being too young to parent are among the facts of the lives of many who cannot parent their children. That statement leaves no secrets as to why some social workers lack confidence in their ability to help. However, the children are desirable, and often natural parents can marshall their strengths to care for them because their children do have the capacity to give love as well as demand care.

Services should be named for *desired outcome* and not pathology, and services should be designed and funded for desired outcomes and not for *isolated activities*. There is a persistent fantasy that *"recruitment of black adoptive families"* can be done by social workers who have nothing to do with the actual placement of children. There have been programs where 40 families were recruited and three (3) children were placed. The recruitment activity that cost $40,000.00 was successful, but the outcome was the placement of only three children.

SOCIAL SERVICES DESIGNED TO BE REMEDIAL SHOULD NOT BECOME A "WAY OF LIFE".

Social programs designed as *"remedial"* often become a way of life. Foster care has been practiced in some form since antiquity. Program administrators have always had trouble keeping the right question in mind -- *"What does the child really need?"*. Foster care workers have slipped into asking, *"Where shall we put the children?"* and then have slipped into forgetting where the children were placed. Consequently, foster care often became, not a temporary form of substitute care but *"a way of life"* for many children, with no questions asked about how long this plan should continue.

Another form of substitute care is adoption. There has been a tendency to grab onto this form of care as the only answer. We at Homes for Black Children prefer to speak of *"permanent living arrangements"* which will include considering a home for a child in the extended family. Homes for Black Children staff wants to keep asking the question, *"What does this particular child need in order to develop into adulthood and to become a productive human being?"* The lives of children and their relationship to adults can be very complicated and there is not a simplistic answer which will help all children.

SUMMARY

We appreciate the interest of this Subcommittee in the family. Our experience with black children who have parents who cannot nurture them indicate these children need their government to plan for them so that they may have their own permanent black families.

Senator DENTON. Thank you, Ms. Duncan.

I find the testimony this morning generally inspirational. I did some arithmetic here. I do not know whether it is right, but I gather of the help you get $50,000 goes to each of those cities, each city's goal is 700 children for that year.

Ms. DUNCAN. It is a total of 600,000. Now, of that $600,000, 50,000 times seven.

Senator DENTON. That is what I have got here.

Ms. DUNCAN. OK. It goes to each of the cities. Then in addition to that, the expenses related to the travel, and the technical assistance for the Fellows, comes out of that, and makes a total of 70 percent of the budget that goes into local projects. The rest of it then is——

Senator DENTON. Except for expenses, though, it looks like you have divided 700 kids into $50,000.

Ms. DUNCAN. No. No, wait a minute.

Senator DENTON. That is only $700 a child, which is great. I am just trying to get the numbers somewhat in order.

Ms. DUNCAN. No. Then I am misleading. It is 100 children in each city. So it is a total of 700.

Now, in terms of the seed money, from the money from the Federal Government, yes, that is $50,000. But what—that is not $50,000, it is not sufficient to launch a program that will place 100 children.

Senator DENTON. No, but as far as the Government's input.

Ms. DUNCAN. That is the extent.

Senator DENTON. One hundred children, 5,000, that is $500 a child. That is still a tremendous bargain.

Ms. DUNCAN. OK. Let us say what has happened in Illinois, where the first project has been launched, they have funding for a 2-year period, which means 200 children they are taking responsibility for, and it is almost a total of—well, it is about $500,000, it is about 200—it is about $250,000 per year, with which they have been able to get from a combination of public and private forces to launch the project. This is a project that does call on the resources of both the public and private sector.

I would like to mention, in terms of Homes for Black Children, that, we grew out of the ashes of the riots of 1967, and following that time as a community, Detroit has begun to talk about what are the problems, and what can be done. It was recognized that there were children in foster care without the expectation that they could be placed for adoption.

We received from the United Way a grant of $100,000 for that first year. With that $100,000 we placed 135 children. At that time, it was not expected that black children, would be placed for adoption. It was anticipated they would remain in the system from the time they came, if that was birth, until 18 years of age.

If those 135 children had stayed, and cared for just 1 year, it would have cost that community at least $600,000.

Senator DENTON. Right. I see the idea.

Ms. DUNCAN. I was just supporting that.

Senator DENTON. Well, now, Sister Fattah, have you been approached—is there any action that indicates that your Home would

be assisted? Are you already being assisted? Is there some way that they are trying to replicate your system? What is going on?

Sister FATTAH. Basically, up to last year, we have had over 500 boys to live with us. The first 200 came on their own, and we raised the money to take care of them ourselves. The last 300 have been sent by the courts, and the court establishes, through the Department of Public Welfare, one rate that is throughout the whole system for delinquents, which is at this time $46 a day.

Senator DENTON. Is that a city or a State vote?

Sister FATTAH. It started out as a—part of the State. We became the first State group home for delinquents. After we had cared for the 200. They told us that there is money for child care.

So then it went from the State, and it now rests with the city.

What we have done at the House is looked at the 200 that came on their own, and the 300 that have been sent, to see what lessons we have learned from that experience, what we have found is that the youth that came on their own, where it was their own idea, we think they have fared better.

Also, in terms of direction, which we would like to go in the future, we are developing a "Boystown" out of the 23 houses that we now own, on one block. We are developing seven businesses for the youth to help operate, and we think it makes more sense for the future that we would be able to generate our own funds, rather than be dependent on a system which can make decisions that we do not always agree with.

Senator DENTON. Sister Fattah, you have indicated some of the answer to this question which deals with how you are able to instill long-term goals in these children, when there has been so much suffering, misguidance and a preoccupation, perhaps with immediate gratification from the whole society reflected in them.

You have talked about the African tradition, the responsibility for others, tracing medicine, you have given them that feeling of identification and worth, and you have certainly, what you described, resolving that thing about the selling, that is the same kind of training I got in school. I was told that the guy who tempts the other guy is also at fault.

So it is not that unique. But I would say that you are a typical example of a very unusual problem being addressed with the sense of responsibility and the knowledge that is required for that group, and I cannot see how we are going to do that through this pyramid that is up here.

We do not have that much time, and neither do the staff members, and we come up with standard solutions to nonstandard problems, and it seems to me that you would be advocates of this Federalism approach, that the money goes more directly to groups like yours, with some kind of monitoring, to make sure that the best groups are getting it, but even allowing for that kind of problem.

Dr. Thomas Soul of Stanford University, who happens to be a Ph. D., says if we took one-third of the money on poverty programs and gave it to the poor we would lift everybody out of poverty. That kind of statistic can be applied to other areas, I know, and I would like to get about it.

Sister FATTAH. I would like to share some information with you. Of our buildings that I mentioned to you, we have been able to ren-

ovate six. The first three were renovated with public funds, at a cost of $350,000. The second building, which will be completed by the end of this month, has cost half that amount, and the money came from private sources, and the youth did some of the actual construction themselves.

The type of assistance we need is only in developing our businesses.

Senator DENTON. Developing what?

Sister FATTAH. Our businesses. This is the type of assistance that we need. Because it is totally inconsistent to tell a young person that he has to stand on his own two feet, and should not need a welfare check, if you are getting one.

Senator DENTON. Well, you are a wise woman. You ought to run for President.

How do you handle the long-term goal installation, other than the ways that you have already outlined? What motivates the children to accept your somewhat disciplined environment? Do you want to discuss that?

Sister FATTAH. Yes, I think there are two answers to that, Senator.

One, I learned from my grandmother, who I think was one of the ladies that Dr. Hill spoke about, all of my growing up years, I remember being told at night, "move over," cousin so and so just came up from Virginia. My grandmother made a practice of getting everybody up the first thing in the morning. I have continued that at the House of Umoja, at 5:30 in the morning there is knock on the door, and everyone has to attend a meeting, which takes place from 6 to 6:30.

During that meeting, is the time for setting goals, and the youth who perhaps have not been up at that hour, they have been accustomed to standing on the corner, usually drinking a lot of wine, they have a habit of sleeping late, and they are usually out there from 1 o'clock on, the idea of getting up that early is totally alien to them, but they get in the habit of it, because if they do not get up, I go around with a bucket of water. So they get up.

But the goal-setting is based on what it is that you have to do for that day. If we have a young person who is going to court, then we have role playing, where one boy is the judge, another the prosecutor, et cetera. So that in his mind he is prepared for what is coming, and he is told that he has to assume responsibility for himself in that courtroom.

Also, this is done in case a young man is going out looking for work that day. So it is, instead of being thrust into the day with maybe a few minutes to get dressed, and time to grab a sandwich, they are accustomed to preparing in their minds for what it is they are going to do, and I always ask them what they are doing for themselves.

So that the habit of setting a goal for a day, then extends to setting goals for a week, and then setting goals for when they leave the house, and eventually setting goals for their life. So this is the reason that I think that they are able to leave and develop a life plan.

Also, I think that what is important is the fact that they are involved in community service. When they come to the house, they

are recipients of service, and see themselves as clients, somebody's client. But at the House of Umoja they are required to perform services for other people, so therefore they are giving service, and it is in terms of the psychology of that, they begin to see themselves as part of the good guys, part of the people who resolve problems, instead of being the problem.

Senator DENTON. You mentioned that you have recently used professionals, and that you make sure that they too fit into the "Familyhood of your organization."

What do you see as the appropriate role of the professional?

Sister FATTAH. Well, for me, the first role was to deal with the paperwork, along with the money that came from the State and the city over the years, the mountain of paperwork became more important than the youth.

So the first task I had for a social worker was to deal with that, so I could deal with the kids. Since that time, I have begun to appreciate the skills of the social worker, particularly in areas of dealing with school placement, in terms of trying to get the young person to establish some contact with his family, usually that is broken down so that there is a need.

The difference is that the social worker is not the person who develops a treatment plan, and then dictates to everyone else what is to happen, and at the House of Umoja, the young person determines for himself what it is that he wants to do, and then everyone pitches in to help make that a possibility.

We have this year acquired a part time psychologist, and here he has proven to be very helpful in terms of testing, for schools that was part—we were basically sometimes groping in the dark, in terms of trying to fit the right school to the right boy. So this again has been very helpful in giving us some data that we could use in dealing with school selection.

Senator DENTON. If I were to hazard a generalization of what you just said, the professional is useful in the technical sense, but not in the policy sense?

Sister FATTAH. Yes.

Senator DENTON. You run the policy?

Sister FATTAH. Yes.

Senator DENTON. Some researchers, Sister, have observed that families often need to demonstrate their failure before they are eligible for services.

In your opinion, what kinds of preventive services could be offered to keep families strong and functional? I realize I may be asking the wrong person, since as you indicated in most of your cases the family has already had a total breakdown.

Sister FATTAH. I have done some thinking in terms of what could happen to prevent a youth from having to go all the way to the bitter end before getting some help. My suggestion would be that we utilize the block captain.

Senator DENTON. The what?

Sister FATTAH. The block captain. Philadelphia is a city of neighborhoods, and in each neighborhood there is a block captain, and that block captain is the person who usually makes sure that people keep their properties up, they go out collecting in case of funerals, this kind of activity.

I would enlarge on the role of the block captain, in terms of being a block parent. Where there is a family that has multiple problems. The block captain is the first one who knows that, outside of the family unit, and I think the block captain should be armed with resources that could be made available to give assistance to that youth and his own family before it reaches the point of having someone to report the child as truant from school, which usually does not occur until months later.

So I would utilize the block captain, who is already there, is unpaid, is a volunteer, but is a time honored tradition in Philadelphia.

I would also utilize ex-offenders when they come out of prison they have a very positive mind, as a rule. At least for 60 to 90 days they have—they are very goal oriented, and they want to share their experiences. I would have the ex-offender report to the church, and the church and the neighborhood could utilize his skills, could give him some assistance where he needs it, in terms of having a good home, in terms of finding a job, but at the same time it would be reciprocal, where that ex-offender would also be a counselor to the people in the neighborhood who are dealing with some difficult children.

Senator DENTON. Thank you.

Ms. Duncan, you have stated that the design for the National Center for Homes for Black Children calls for its demise at the end of 3 years.

Ms. DUNCAN. Right.

Senator DENTON. So many federally funded child welfare programs come into existence and start to spend a lot of time and energy in self-perpetuation.

Why do you believe that the objectives of the National Center for Homes for Black Children will be met at the end of 3 years?

Ms. DUNCAN. Well, we are on the road, we think, in terms of what is happening with them, but our feeling is that the National Center did not come into being in order to create a network of services that had some central connection, but rather to assist in the development of projects that could give a needed service in a local community. Every community has a life of its own, and a structure of its own. This needs to be taken into consideration.

Now, when I say the demise in 3 years, I am not saying that that is necessarily true for the seven projects. Their future will depend on whether or not they actually meet a need in that community, and deserve a place within it.

For example, the Homes for Black Children was created in 1969, as a special project. In 1972 we became a United Way agency, and the decision was based on our effectiveness in meeting the needs of children, which was unmatched within that community in terms of the needs of black children.

We say that the future of each of these projects locally depends upon their effectiveness. Detroit has no reason to remain involved. If there is some reason for the projects to be connected, then there are enough national organizations already without another one.

Senator DENTON. So you go in and raise awareness, and get them to set up a system which is responsible and effective, and in that

sense you are not self-perpetuating services, you are establishing the awareness and the means by which it would be provided?

Ms. DUNCAN. That is right.

For example, in Washington, D.C., the sponsoring agency is Family and Child Services, and at this point, with the "seed money" from the national center, which pays for most of the salary of the fellow, the agency has made a commitment, and has been able to get another worker involved. The agency has some prospects, for funding; but it is still very much in need of resources. The fact of the matter is that they have already placed two kids, they have three in process right now. However, it is not—considered a project that is launched.

The energy and the activity are coming from the local community. It is not the national center, as such.

Senator DENTON. The President is setting up an organization called the President's Task Force on Private Sector Initiatives, and they are just getting formed and there are 44 men involved with it. I have met with some of them, including the head of it, William Verity, last week.

The way you two talk, and are acting, is precisely what he wants to get linked up, and get the attention of this private sector out there in those cities.

Have you been contacted by them, or do you know the right person to contact in your field in that organization?

Ms. DUNCAN. That task force is aware of our activities.

Senator DENTON. How about you, Sister?

Sister FATTAH. Yes, when the President announced the formation of that group, he used the House of Umoja as an example.

Senator DENTON. Excellent, because they still have not gotten to Father Clements yet, and he is doing a good job out there.

Ms. Duncan, do you believe that some otherwise adoptable children spend too much time being passed around in the foster care system? I think you already indicated that.

Ms. DUNCAN. Yes, no question about it.

Senator DENTON. And you already answered that the children's chances of being adopted permanently are hurt by prolonged foster care arrangements.

Ms. DUNCAN. And that early decisions, that planning the role of the child——

Senator DENTON. This will be the last question.

You have stated that social services should be developed and named not for pathology, but for desired outcomes.

Ms. DUNCAN. You build in—it builds in the attitudes that you have to have child abuse to keep the program going. Homes for Black Children has protective service for families who are known for abuse of their children, but we call it our black family preservation program. Because that is our desired outcome, and that says to the world what we hope to achieve. Yes. So that is it.

Senator DENTON. I would like to thank you both, and to express my sense of admiration for you and the other witnesses this morning.

I believe that self-reliance is the thing that we have to rejuvenate for, and care for in one another, the two go hand in hand.

I certainly recognize the example that all of you have been setting for the rest of us, and I am frankly more optimistic about the President's direction than I was before this hearing began.

I will ask you to answer any questions we send you in the next few days, answer them in writing, and if you have any further testimony, the record will be open to receive it.

Thank you all again.

This hearing stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:47 a.m., the subcommittee adjourned, subject to the call of the Chair.]

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